異世界ゆるり紀行
～子育てしながら
冒険者します～

Isekai Yururi Kikou

~Raising Children While Being an Adventurer~

- Volume 1 -

(Chapter 1-41)

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– Synopsis –

A god was suddenly prostrating in front of Kayano Takumi.
He was apparently killed by mistake. Moreover, he can't be reborn again.
However, he is able to live in a different world?
Then, let's do that, please.
The god made a mistake again and transferred me into a dangerous forest. Seriously, what's going on?
Besides, there are children here.
I can't leave them here, I will take care of them.

Prologue

Tree, tree, tree…

Turning around 360 degrees, there are thick trees growing everywhere I look.

A lonely forest with no roads, my feet get covered in bushes with every step.

I can see a faint light through a gap of the branches so it's a daytime, but because of the crowded trees, the overall mood is gloomy.

Syl…… wasn't there a little better starting place?

Why here? There should have been many alternatives, right?

「Gururururu」

The person who I separated from a little while ago would probably permit me a complaint or two… While thinking so, I suddenly hear a beast's growl and look around in panic.

Certainly, a beast is running towards me——A Red Wolf.

Red Wolf is a red, large-breed dog-like wolf monster. If I'm not mistaken, it's a Rank C?

It has completely marked me as its prey.

I have no confidence because I'm improvising, but if I can't just stand here and let it attack me, so I point my hand like a pistol at the Red Wolf.

「《Air Shot》」

At the same time I shout, a lump of air shoots from my finger.

I fire a compressed air magic which resembles a bullet.

The air bullet hits the target, the Red Wolf『Gyain』whinnes and gets blown off backwards.

I feel relieved that I hit the target properly, but I'm still cautious in case it can still move.

「This is the beginning, huh……」

Haa… I sigh, approach the Red Wolf's dead body and store it with《Infinite Storage》

Chapter 1
Who are you?

「I am terribly sorry!」

Who are you?

An unknown silver-haired youth is suddenly prostrating in front of me on the floor.

Around 20 years old…… I think he's younger than me.

Because he's facing the floor without flinching, I can't see his face.

I don't understand…… why? I think that he surely has a well-featured face.

The reason why he's prostrating in front of me is unknown.

Because I have woken up in this unknown place just a several minutes ago.

That's right.

Before I noticed, I already was in a room I don't recognize.

A room surrounded by white walls from every direction.

The size is around 8 tatami, I think…… There are two white doors. There are no windows.

There are two leathered-covered sofas for two people facing each other.

A jet-black glass table is in between the sofas. Nothing else is here aside from that.

Uun…… because of the white walls, this room seems like a "typical" president's office.

Maa, that does not matter, though.

Since I don't recognize this place, is this a kidnapping?

I thought so at first, but I'm not restricted and above all, I think that the kidnapper is quite a considerable person……

After wandering around the room aimlessly, I return my sight at the youth on the floor.

Un, he's still lowering his head.

Is that it? You won't do anything unless I say something thing?

I would already like the explanation.

Can't be helped, let's greet him first.

「Ah~ Umm, who are you and what do you want from me after bringing me here?」

When I spoke, the youth finally raised his head.

Un, as expected, he's a terrible handsome young man.

A green eyes together with silver hair. A tall figure with facial features that would put Hollywood stars to shame.

The clothes he is wearing are plain and white, but that makes him look rather attractive.

I can't find any faults.

This goes past envy, it may be worth of respect.

While I'm on such topic, he was also staring back at me who is impolitely observing him.

…… He's still sitting on the floor, though.

Because he was looking at me like that, I had to tell him 『Wait』 as I would command a dog……

This, am I the bad guy? Am I getting misunderstood? I'm not a bad person, though!

He has been apologizing since the beginning, so I shouldn't be at fault. Probably!

「…… How do you do? I'm Kayano Takumi」

「Thank you kindly for the politeness. My name is Sylphreel. Please, call my Syl」

「……」

「……」

Haa, he sighs and introduces himself while bowing.

He doesn't do anything aside from that.

He properly answered me. Yosh, I can go ahead like this! Is what I though, but——。

——The conversation didn't continue……

Why did it end with self-introductions?!

Where's the follow-up? An explanation, please!

The one who knows the circumstances is you, Syl!

「…… Ah～——Syl-san, who are you, where am I and why am I here?」

「No need for honorifics. ——From Takumi-san's standpoint, I'm a god. This place is called a Holy sanctuary」

「…… Haa!?」

This youth is a god and this play is a sanctuary?

Is this a new scam?

「This is not a scam」

「!!」

Eh? Were my thoughts just read?

「No. Although I can read minds, I didn't read that before」

「Then, how do you know!?」

「Somehow, I thought you wouldn't believe so I intended to correct it」

Nonono! You have been like an abandoned puppy a while ago, why are you suddenly so calm?

It's strange no matter how much I think about it!?

But, I understand! I have understood that I will get only tired talking to this person in a serious manner!

「…… Can you explain simply?」

「Ah, I'm sorry. I have killed you by mistake」

Too simple!!

Chapter 2
The explanation, please

『Ah, I'm sorry. I have killed you by mistake』

Unexpected murder report.

It seems I have been somehow murdered by this god……

When we move to the sofa and I hear Syl's explanation——

「Umm…… there appeared a "distortion" in a certain place, so I wanted to reinforce it, but I put too much power into it and it passed through. This "distortion" connected with a place where Takumi-san was at that time so… that… the great power passed through and directly hit Takumi-san…」

Haa————————……

I let out a lengthy sigh.

According to Syl's explanation, he didn't have any ill intent, but I died because of a trivial (?) power measurement error.

However, it doesn't seem like it ends here.

Under the influence of the power which directly hit my body, I have been already extinguished. He apparently narrowly pulled my soul into this sanctuary, but my soul still received a great shock and because of that it's not able to enter the circle of reincarnation again.

This seems to be the reason Syl was prostrating before me.

Uun…… Although I can't reincarnate again, normally, a person who died won't notice that he's reincarnated, right?

A person who remembers his previous life should be rare, right?

All my 28 years of life would get "deleted, right?

I don't know what happens after one dies naturally, but since I am able to hold a conversation like this, should I be delighted that my soul is safe?

「So, what is going happen to me from now on?」

「Eeeeh!?」

I judged that rather than worrying about death, what is going to happen to me from now on is more important so when I asked Syl made a strange face.

「Eh? Is there perhaps no after-sales service?」

Seriously!? Am I going to remain like this?

Will I remain a soul-like existence floating around?

Eh? Ghost? An unnatural existence?

「No, wrong! I have prepared for words of abuse, so Takumi-san's words just greatly surprised me」

「Ah~ Un. I have a feeling that words of abuse would be more suitable for Syl」

「……」

Although I should be angry, I don't have the recollection of actually dying. Therefore, somehow, I don't have any will to get angry.

Besides, Syl has been keeping a low profile since the beginning so I have no motivation?

If that was his intention that would make me, on the contrary, angry, but I have figured in this short time that Syl doesn't know how to properly express himself.

「It's a lie. I half joked」

「Ha, half!?」

「Un. Half. It's true that you made a mistake in the measurement of power, reflect on it」

「…… Yes」

Un, I have figured out how to handle Syl.

Is it okay to handle a god with such attitude? Is what I thought, but since Syl doesn't seem to mind, it's alright I guess?

「I will leave depression for later. So, what is going happen to me?」

「Ah, yes. First, I will make Takumi-san a new body, then I will put your soul into it」

「A new body?」

「Yes. I will compose it for you with my power」

Syl is going to make it……

……

……

……

……

「…… I'm worried you will fail and create something strange, though」

I'm somewhat uneasy…… Syl, he looks like the clumsy type…

Physical limbs are missing! Is not what will probably happen, but… I'm worried about the things with normal functions……

「I won't! It's all right!! I will use all my power to create a proper one!!」

「I have a feeling that all your power is dangerous so stop it. Create it carefully…… and then」

「Yes, I will do my best! Unfortunately, because Takumi-san's new body will have my power dwelling inside, it won't be able to return back to Earth. Therefore, I will move you to a different world I manage——Aetherdia. Right, it would be called a different world for Takumi-san」

Aetherdia is the world with five gods.

God of Creation, Malianor

Fire God, Salamanteel

Water God, Windell

Wind God, Sylphreel

Earth God, Nomoodle

The God of Creation, Malianor-sama is the chief god. Syl and the others support Malianor-sama.

And it's apparently the well-known world of sword and magic.

「Fu~n. I have no physical ability, won't I easily die, though?」

「It's all right! I will make you a healthy body, after all! Also, I will give you skills!!」

「Skills, huh…」

「That's right! Skills!! Do you have something, in particular, you would like?」

「Let's see…… First, not knowing the language would be inconvential」

Language is important. Not having a mutual understanding spells trouble.

「Language and common knowledge are easy to insert to the body, don't worry about it. Also, I will attach an appraisal skill」

「That's good, I will leave it to you. Also, an item box! Do you have something like that?」

When it comes to a different world, it's an item box, right?

The difficulty will change depending on its existence.

「There are high capacity magic tools called Magic Bag, but I recommend a variety of space magic《Infinite Storage》which also stops the passage of time」

「Oh~ that's it! I would also want some self-defense magic or technique」

「I understand. If you don't have any specifications, I will choose for you, is that all right?」

Infinite Storage! Sounds nice. Stopping passage of time sounds attractive.

Something to protect the body with is left!

Magic has lots of possibilities, huh… And it's not like I will be able to use a weapon……

I don't understand the varieties of magic, will it be okay to leave it to Syl? He's more or less a god, he will probably choose something suitable, right?

「I will leave it to you. Also, please don't throw me out penniless」

「I understand. It has been decided to use my attribute, wind magic for now then. I will insert the knowledge on using magic inside the body, okay! Also, I will put a necessary amount of money inside the 《Infinite Storage》!」

Syl is the Wind God, after all. Speaking of wind magic, Wind Cutter, and Air Bullet are basic, right? Maa~ If he inserts the knowledge inside the body, will I be able to use magic reflexively? That will be helpful if that's the case.

Oh, moreover, not just money. What about an item! I want to ask.

「Are you ready? Takumi-san will have to sleep while I insert the soul inside the body, do you have something you want to ask before it's too late?」

「Un? Is this the last time we can talk?」

「Talking directly won't be possible for a while. If you pray towards my statue in a shrine, we should be able to converse」

「Is it all right to contact a god?」

「Yes. There won't be any problem. There might be a time when I'm busy and unable to answer, but it should be okay to contact me anytime」

Language is okay. Knowledge is good. Essential skills and items are prepared.

Is it all right?

「I can't think of anything right now, I will rely on the shrine if I have something」

「Yes. I will be waiting for you. I have caused you trouble. The next time you wake up, you will be in that world. Please, enjoy you new life without a fail」

I nod to Syl and my consciousness fades away.

Ah, I forgot to tell Syl to emphasize the work on my appearances.

Chapter 3
I have arrived, different world

——And I return to the beginning.

「Umm…《Open》」

First, in order to confirm the situation, I open the menu by relying on the inserted knowledge. Then, a black, half transparent window screen appears in front of me.

This is one of the special abilities Syl has given me.

Status
【Name】Takumi Kayano
【Race】Human?［Wind God's retainer (Temporary)］
【Occupation】
【Age】20
【Level】3
【Skills】
Light Magic 50 | Dark Magic 50
Wind Magic 150 | Space Magic 100
Life Magic 100
Swordsmanship 50 | Throwing 18
Appraisal 200 | Dismantling 100
Cooking 85 | Sewing 23
Washing 12 | Cleaning 31
Crafting 37
Arithmetics 107 | Reading 125
Physical Attack Resistance 300 | Magic Attack Resistance 300
【Titles】
Transmigrated From a Different World
Blessed by the God of Creation, Malianor

A status screen appeared.

Alright, the name is my full name. Those with Family name are nobility! Though there are cases like that, it should to be all right.

Eeeh!? Race! Question mark!? I, I am not a human?

Rather, a follower? I have become god's retainer (Temporary)!? I didn't hear anything about this, Syl!!

Why!? Is what I thought, but thinking about it carefully, this body was made by Syl so it's probably because of that……? He said something about his power dwelling inside…… it can't be helped at this time…… let's leave it at that.

Class. Blank space. Maa, that's right.

20 years old… I became younger……

Level 3. Un? …… Ah, did my level raise after killing the Red Wolf? Then, no problems here.

Skills are…… relatively decent…? To be honest, I thought Syl might forget because he's like that. Un, I'm somehow relieved.

Let's see…… the numbers are proficiency? 50 is generally "more or less usable", over 100 is skilled. Over 200 is master rank. 300 is MAX? Getting that far is a miracle.

I see~ Looking at the proficiency numbers of the skills, the magic and such is what Syl gave me and cooking and such are what I already had originally?

Because I lived alone, cooking was mundane, I sewed my buttons and did some weekend carpentering.

Still, the resistances…… are completely strange? The proficiency is MAXED. Is this that? That thing Syl said he will choose himself? Ah, mou…… he was too enthusiastic…

Umm, next is titles. Titles are something like nicknames or aliases?

Transmigrated From a Different World…… Maa~ seems right.

The God of Creation Malianor is the chief god who is supported by the four others, right?

What is a blessing? When did I receive a blessing? Maa… while I was asleep, right…

But, wouldn't it say "Blessing of the Wind God's Sylphreel" normally?

——Piron♪

Ah, the titles increased.

Let's see, let's see……【Friend of Wind God Sylphreel】……

Yosh! Let's move on!

U~mm, next is……

There's a tab beside status and item menu.

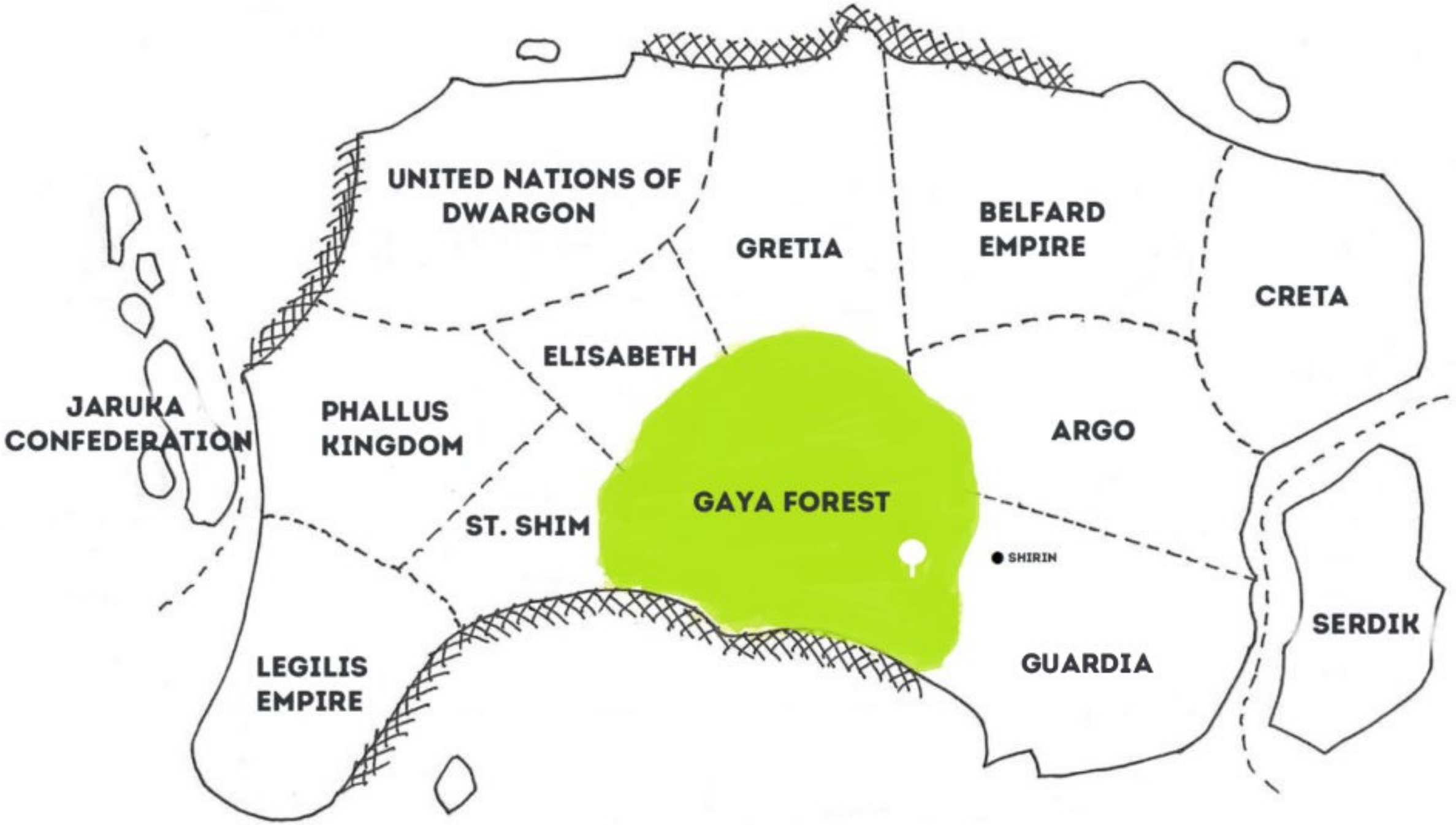
It's a map.

When I try to view that, a map appears on the whole screen. This is apparently a world map.

Rough dotted lines are drawn, country names and their capitals are displayed. There are ten countries on the main continent. One island country. And one Confederation on a small archipelago. There are 12 countries in total.

There's a forest on the south side in the center of the continent.

There's small white pin stuck in the place it says『Gaya Forest』.


UNITED NATIONS OF DWARGON
GRETIA
BELFARD EMPIRE
CRETA
ELISABETH
JARUKA CONFEDERATION
PHALLUS KINGDOM
ARGO
GAYA FOREST
ST. SHIM
SHIRIN
SERDIK
LEGILIS EMPIRE
GUARDIA

When I touch that pin, the map zooms in and the area around the pin becomes detailed.

Un, this is the place I'm at. I'm sure.

When I move while looking at the map, the pin also moves. Present location found!

I slide the map away and inquire about the details of this forest.

This『Gaya Forest』is large. Furthermore, this forest passed through five countries.

Where should I go? From my present location, the Guardia Country in the east is closest. There's a town called Shirin slightly away from the forest.

Let's go there. The destination, a town called Shirin.

Umm, next is……

The next tab is item list. While thinking to examine that, I felt like someone was watching me, so I turned around and saw two little children looking at me.

Azure colored hair and gold eyes. Thin bodies with simple ragged clothes stained with dirt.

Judging from the atmosphere, one is a girl and one a boy, but two of them looks exactly the same.

Twins?

It's strange that there are children alone in the forest, I don't sense any other people around.

「Are you lost? Did you come here alone?」

When I ask the most plausible reason, the children tilt their heads. They look blankly at me in silence.

When I take a step forward, they take a step back.

…… They seem to be cautious of me.

I use the appraisal skill and a window appears in front of me.

Seems like appraising people is possible.

Status
【Name】
【Race】Human?
【Occupation】
【Age】5
【Level】12
【Skills】
Water Magic | Hand-to-hand Combat
Throwing | Presence Detection
Abnormal Status Resistance
【Titles】
????

It seems I'm not able to view skill proficiency of other people.

Or is it related to a proficiency of my appraisal skill?

Nevertheless, why do I feel like the status of these two children is not normal…

The name parts are blank… it means that they don't have names, right?

Also, "human?" again. Is that race normal over here?

The titles part is question marks…

N~ what should I do? First of all, leaving like this would be inhumane…

「There's nothing to fear, won't you come over here?」

Ah, they came when I called.

I had to drop on my knees and timidly beckon them, but they approached.

「Umm, 《Washing》… and《Heal》」

First, I cleaned their bodies with Life Magic. As the name suggest, Life Magic is closely related to livelihood. Wash the target with《Washing》, illuminate surroundings with《Light》, make things dry with《Dry》etc…… It has the smallest power, but it has a wide range of uses, it's a convenient magic usable with the smallest amount of magic power.

The eyes of the two shined and blinked in surprise, but they probably judged that they are in no danger so they didn't run away.

After making their bodies clean, I could see small wounds all over their bodies so I healed them with healing magic. Healing Magic is Light attribute magic so I have it.

「Yosh! This is good. The next is a meal……」

They are this thin, they must be very hungry.

I check the item list while thinking so.

「Umm, there is…… money, equipment, medicine… water and food. Food is… umm…… hard-baked bread and dried meat… It seems too hard for the children right now. It seems hard to digest… Ah, fruit. Would this be easier to eat?」

The fruit, Ranka is sweet and rehydrating, it greatly resembles a peach. I retrieve fruits from the《Infinite Storage》and offer it to the two children.

「Here, eat up」

I place the fruit in the hands of the two children.

The two examine and sniff the Ranka fruit in their hands. After a while, they confirm that it's not dangerous and start eating.

They look like small animals.

Seeing them comfortably eating, I once again confirm the contents of the item list.

「There's also… raw meat, vegetables, and wheat flour…… huh……」

…… Syl. Even if you give me ingredients, I can't cook without seasonings……

——Piron♪

Ah, an item was added.

A set of kitchen utensils and seasonings were added to the item list after I complained towards Syl. Seems like Syl confirmed the circumstances over here and send me the items.

There's only one thing I can do!

I would love tableware. Additional change of clothes and towels would be nice.

Ah, there a considerable distance from here to the nearest town. An overcoat or blanket would really help for camping.

——Piron♪

I heard a mechanical sound from somewhere and a large quantity of items was added to the list.

…… Un. Syl, thank you.

While I was doing that, the children finished eating the fruit and *jii~* were staring at me.

Because the clothes added to the item list were not only for me, but even for the children, I decided to change their clothes.

I click on the《Clothes》on the item list and retrieve clothes from the《Infinite Storage》.

「Isn't it too tight, can you move freely?」

Oh, they nodded. It seems all right.

These children, although they do not talk, they properly understand me, right?

「I'm now going to leave the forest and go to the nearby town, do you want to go together with me?」

I can't leave the children here so I ask them, the two children look at each other.

They seem to be conversing. Although they are not talking…

Is that it? The mutual understanding between twins?

They look at me. Did they decide? Nodding means they want to go with me, right?

「I'm Takumi. Best regards」

Chapter 4
Fellow Travellers

As expected, those two don't have names.

Therefore——

「Yosh, I decided! You are Allen. And you are Elena」

I think it would be inconvenient from now on if they didn't have names, I named the boy Allen, and the girl Elena.

I somehow felt these names would be suitable.

Were the names appropriate? Allen and Elene seem satisfied so it's okay.

When I checked their statuses, it had already recognized them as Allen and Elena.

I don't know what criteria it has been decided on, but changing it again is now impossible. Hahaha~!

In such way, the three of us peacefully walk through the forest.

The two children are thin, but they have stamina. They are following me without complaining.

However, because they are without a doubt children, I take a break and let them drink water and eat dried persimmons.

Dried persimmons? It something Syl has added into my inventory. There are several types of dried fruit, there was also some onigiri, but they are already eaten.

By the way, rice does exist in Aetherdia. It's called white wheat over here and is mainly used as feed for domestic animals.

If I want to buy some, I will have no chance buy to purchase it from a domestic animal farmhouse?

Ah! It seems something similar to soy sauce and miso also exists!

After all, for a Japanese, it's a rice! Soy Sauce! Miso! Right~ I'm glad this world also have them~♪

◊ – ♦ – ◊

Has it been approximately after an hour that we started walking again? Allen and Elena started suddenly running.

「Eh? What!?」

What came into my sight was two children chasing after a huge boar three times the size of them——I saw them charging at a Giant Boar.

「Allen! Elena!」

They run with all their power, but they doesn't seem to be able to catch up. They are obviously chasing after a monster.

I can't shoot the monster with magic because the two are there.

What should I do!? While thinking so——

Allen and Elena vigorously run towards one of the Giant Boars without stopping and give it a flying kick.

The Giant Boar they kicked screams『Buhi』and gets blown off backward.

Once they kick it, they jump up right after landing and give an axe kick to the Wild Boars neck.

The Giant Boar goes *doshin* and collapses.

「……」

So strong! What are these five-year-olds!!

These children certainly are level 12, but… Eh, is this normal!? A common sense of children of this world?

That can't be true. Normal children would die.

While I unconsciously stopped running because of the shock and stood in place absentmindedly, Allen and Elena returned to my place as if nothing happened.

「「……」」

「…… Haa——— You two… you knew there was a Giant Boar so you started running?」

Two two children nod at my deep sigh.

They seem to understand.

「Would you tell me next time you found something before you start running?」

The two children nod again.

Don't they have any sense of danger…? It's a great achievement that these two young children survived like this until now, but if they keep on running away each time a monster appears, I will be in a bind.

I'm taking care of the children, letting them protect me would be foolish.

After confirming the two aren't injured I lightly pat their heads, then I face the defeated Giant Boar.

They probably don't know that monster meat can be eaten. Allen and Elena are ignoring the downed monster.

They don't have a knife to dismantle it, nor they are able to build fire to cook it, so it may not have any significance for these two.

I collect the Giant Boar while the two look at me with "What are you going to do with that?" expressions.

First of all, let's store it inside my《Infinite Sotrage》. If I can sell this in the town, I will purchase supplies for these two.

After deciding, I beckon the two children and walk towards outside of the forest.

◊ – ♦ – ◊

After that.

Following Giant Boar the three of us encountered the Bloody Bear, Red Wolf x2, Great Monkey x2.

Each time, when Allen and Elena noticed a monster, they would pull on my clothes or arms to let me know.

However! Right after letting me know, they would immediately run off and start chasing monsters bigger than me.

Not knowing what to do with them, I checked for injuries then patted their heads. The two children close their eyes and smile in comfort while I pat them.

Are? Doesn't this mean I'm praising them?

That's why the two run off chasing after monsters…?

I thought that my real intentions didn't transmit, but I couldn't stop myself from patting Allen's and Elena's heads.

Chapter 5
The First Camping

The overall dark forest became even darker.

Seems like the sun went down.

That being the case, I decided to stop advancing for today.

「Allen, Elena. I will make a fire so help me gather some wood」

Saying that, I pick up a fallen twig, Allen and Elena imitate me and start gathering.

What should I do for dinner?

Syl has supplied me with some ordinary bread, so… let's make a simple vegetable soup.

Should I also dismantle the monster meat and make some meat skewers?

The two children are bright so if I let them eat the dismantled meat, they will realize that monster meat can be consumed.

I store the gathered twigs in the《Infinite Storage》and take out one Red Wolf.

This is the fellow I killed with the air bullet. Maa, I have no other way at the moment……

I retrieve a knife, I cut open the Red Wolf's abdomen first to drain the blood in order to start processing.

If I defeated the Red Wolf with a sword, I would pay attention to the value of the fur and start processing from the wounds, but there is no conspicuous wound by killing it with an air bullet, so starting at its abdomen is the theory.

I have the knowledge of dismantling, I even have the skill. Because of that, the dismantling process is mysteriously imprinted in my body.

There's no challenge even though I'm dismantling for the first time. My body moves without hesitation. Even the blood flowing from its cut open abdomen is taken for granted.

The new body itself doesn't feel uncomfortable, but I have realized that the previous Kayano Takumi and the present Kayano Takumi are different.

The dismantling advanced without a delay.

Allen and Elena *ji*~ were staring at my first dismantling.

It's a gain if they remember the process even if only a little. Still, they are only 5 years old so I really don't expect them to start dismantling anytime soon.

After I finish, I store the fur, materials, and meat into the《Infinite Storage》and bury the non-usable internal organs in a hole I dug beforehand. The air is filled with the scent of blood so I disperse it with Wind Magic, I washed my body with《Washing》and decided to move a bit just in case.

Now then, with the preparations complete, let's start making the dinner.

First, I make a simple stove with the stones and light the fire.

I have a Life Magic《Ignition》which allows me to make a fire, but I used something called Ignition Stone in order to show Allen and Elena how to make a fire with tools.

Maa, it's that. It's similar to a match.

【Ignition Stone】
A stone that bursts into a fire when directly injected with magic power.
Because only fragments of the stone are used, it's mostly disposable.
Because they won't be activated unless directly injected with magic power, storing them away in《Infinite Storage》is possible.

Once the fire is lit, I pour water into a small pot and put it on the stove. Before the water starts boiling, I cut the Red Wolf meat into easy to eat pieces, pierce it on skewers and lightly salt it. I stab it around the stove and let it grill.

Once the water in the pot is boiling, I add vegetables and adjust the taste with a stock cube and salt.

The stock soup is a Japan-like product. It's a chicken consomme cube of a certain manufacturer[1]. There was no packing so I can't tell certainly, though.

The meat also looks ready when the soup is completed.

When I handed the grilled Red Wolf meat to Allen and Elena, they both sunk their teeth in without any hesitation. However, the the grilled meat was piping hot so they separated their mouths from it in panic.

I take my share of meat skewers and *fuufuu* show them how to cool it down.

Oh! Red Wolf meat is surprisingly tasty.

Seeing my way of eating, the two children *fuufuu* imitate me and blow on their skewers and eat.

This seems to be their first time eating with tableware, so I carefully teach them how to hold a spoon. The children start eating the soup while tightly grasping their spoons.

We have met just a half a day ago, but the two twins are surprisingly attached to me.

They started eating straight away without cautiously sniffing it like before. They are now eating without hesitation.

「Is it tasty?」

The two nod at my question.

Un, they are all smiles.

Since there is nothing to do after the meal, I intend to sleep even though it just became dark. It would be better to get up earlier in the morning.

Thinking so, I retrieve a Barrier Stones.

【Barrier Stone】
A magic tool that can raise a barrier.
The barrier is set up by stabbing the stake-like stones in the ground in four cardinal directions formation. It prevents monsters from entering the space between the stones.
At least four stones are necessary, the bigger the space between the stones is, the thinner the barrier gets.

Un, it's a convenient tool.

I set up the stones 3~4m in all directions. With this, I can sleep in peace without having to worry about being attacked by monsters.

Lying on the ground would be indeed painful so I wrap myself in a blanket and sit against a tree.

Is this the most comfortable? What about the children?

After sitting down, I look at Allen and Elena, but they are standing still, not knowing what to do.

「Allen, Elena. Come」

The two immediately came to me after calling them.

Then, I sit them to my sides, extend my hands around them and wrap them with my blanket.

The two got surprised and couldn't settle down, but they soon clung to me.

The children's bodies are warm like a hot-water bottle, warm and comfortable. It's not surprising, but I got exhausted by the new environment. The sleepiness attacks me immediately and I fall asleep at once.

Chapter 6
The First Town

Part 1

We were able to safely pass through the Gaya Forest!

We have encountered many monsters, but I honestly pleaded to Allen and Elena to let me defeat them, and I brought them down with magic.

I'm glad the children are so understanding! Thanks to that, my level has raised to 11!

Even so, the forest is bigger than I thought. It took three full days to get out of the forest. Although I'm saying that, our pace was slow and we picked up fruits and herbs on the way.

We got out of the forest's eastern side on the fourth day. I don't know how long it would take to get out of the depths of the forest, but it was quite the distance to get out from the edge of the forest. It takes probably more than a month.

Ah! By the way, unlike Earth where the week has 7 days, Aetherdia's week is 6 days long.

In order——

Day of the Light, Day of the Fire, Day of the Water, Day of the Wind, Day of the Earth, Day of the Darkness

——They are called like that.

24 hours makes a day, 6 days makes a week, and 5 weeks makes a month.

30 days is a month and 12 months is a year. Therefore, one year consists 360 days.

The months are called without a change, First Month, Second Month, Third Month……

First~Third months are Spring

Fourth~Sixth months are Summer

Seventh~Ninth months are Fall

Tenth~Twelfth months are Winter

They are not much different from Japan's seasons. East of the continent is warmer, west is colder.

The eastern territories are the hottest in Summer, west territories are the coldest in the Winter.

By the way, it is the Third Month now. Guardia's weather is very nice.

An empty grassland spreads before us after leaving the forest. There was something that could be considered a road so we walked for around 4 hours along it before seeing a town.

When we arrive at the gates of the town Shirin, soldiers… no, they are knights. Three knights are on the watch.

The town of Shirin is endorsed as a Rank A impregnable town at the edge of『Gaya Forest』.

N? That's right. We are in a very dangerous place.

The superior monsters are near the heart of the forest, so the monsters we have encountered were all relatively weak.

But, it's not known when a strong monster will come out of the forest. There's a branch of the Knights precisely because the town of Shirin is in such a place.

These knights are guarding the west gate we came to. One of the knight is waiting for us.

「You! Did you come from the Gaya Forest?」

「Yes. That's right」

The knight makes a surprised expression at my obedient answer.

Maa~ it's a dangerous place. I myself don't look any strong and even if I was, it's not a place one would normally take children with him.

「There were medicinal herbs I needed. We didn't go too deep and these children are strong enough to defend themselves」

As expected, I can't say that I was transferred to the forest by a god and it's better to answer honestly instead of making poor excuses.

Actually, we didn't go to the heart of the forest and we gathered herbs. It's also the truth that the children are strong.

「Did you get the herbs you needed?」

「Yes. Fortunately, I was able to obtain them in a nearby place」

「I see. Don't be too reckless. Then, you are entering the town, right?」

「Thank you very much for the advice. Of course, I would like to enter the town, but this is a gate one can enter and exit freely, right?」

The gates are normally open during the daytime, but this gate is closed for some reason.

But, I check just in case.

「This is a gate that only a few people come in and out, after all」

Ah, I see. It's such a thing.

The knight answers after looking at the gate and realizing that we are locked out.

This place is directly facing the Gaya Forest so only authorized knights and high ranked adventurers are utilizing it. Ordinary people rarely approach the gate so there's no reason to keep the gate open when there's no traffic.

「Hand me the identification papers」

「I'm sorry. We come from a rural village so we don't have identification papers yet」

「Come this way if that's the case. We have to do the inspection and other procedures」

「Yes. Sorry for the inconvenience, but I will be troubling you」

「Don't worry about it, that's our job!」

Part 2

「First, please put your hand on this crystal」

We were taken to a small office-like room and a crystal was presented in front of me.

I put my hand on it as I was told to. When I do so, the crystal emits a faint white light.

This is a tool that determines whether one is a criminal or not when touched. It will start shining red if one is a criminal.

When one commits a crime, he will receive a corresponding title, the crystal seems to be reacting to that.

Also, when people want to start living in the town or when a baby is born, a resident card would be issued and a magic power will be registered at the same time. When the crystal finds out a person who committed a crime, the data would spread through the other crystals distributed worldwide, making it easy for other locations to understand that a criminal is trying to enter the town. Meaning, it's waste of time trying to flee the country.

「Un. There are no problems. Please, let me inspect the children next」

Allen and Elena took turns putting their hands at the crystal. There were no problems so I had to pay the 200G (Minors are half the price) toll next.

I pretended that I'm taking money from the pocket while I retrieved 400G from the《Infinite Storage》.

This is from the knowledge that was inserted into my body, but it seems that there are not many people who have a Space Magic. Therefore, I decided to not use it in public.

The plan is to buy a small bag and use it as if it was a Magic Bag.

Right, right, the money on Aetherdia is called G(old)——

Copper Coin = 1G

Large Copper Coin = 10G

Silver Coin = 100G

Large Silver Coin = 1,000G

Gold Coin = 10,000G

Large Gold Coin = 100,000G

Platinum Coin = 1,000,000G

——The money is using such decimal system.

One Copper Coin has a value of around 10 yen. Therefore, the toll costs around 2,000 yen.

By the way, the amount of money I have presently at hand is approximately 1,000,000G. That makes about 10,000,000 yen.

Syl, so generous!

Also, what is strange that the money is listed as "G" in the item list, but I'm able to retrieve any coin.

Is exchanging Copper for Silver hard?. Is what I thought at first. But, I can take out the whole amount in copper coins and I can take it out even in gold coins. How convenient…

「This will be your temporary identification papers. It's necessary during your stay in town so don't lose it. Also, if you plan to stay in the town for long, official identification papers would be needed to make」

「Yes. The plan is to register at the Adventurer guild」

「I see. Then, as soon as your registration is completed, return the temporary identification papers here」

「I understand」

I ask the kind Knight-samas about a recommended inn and enter the town.

◊ – ♦ – ◊

We advance on the street to the inn the knights recommended to me.

The number of the people walking down the street is quite high, is it because the town is near the borders?

It seems that Allen and Elena see this many people for the first time as they are clinging around my waist as if glued to it.

This timid action is very cute, but it's hard to walk.

This is it,『Komadori Pavilion』. The recommended inn.

It's is an excellent establishment with good security and affordable prices, that's what the knights told me.

When I open the door, Obasan in her 40 greets us.

「I'd like to stay, do you have a vacant room?」

「We have a room. One night for one is 400G, 500G with dinner and breakfast. Hot bath requires a separate fee.」

When I ask, Obasan politely replies.

「These children are with me, is it all right? They are obedient children, I don't think they will be an annoyance」

Small children may cry in the middle of a night, which may cause trouble later so I'm asking beforehand.

「Yes. It's all right. They are small so they will be fine sleeping in one bed」

It seems okay. The knight-samas might have recommended this inn with that in mind.

Moreover, it seems there's discount for children.

「Allen, Elena. Are you okay sleeping in one bed?」

When I ask the two who are clinging to me, they start clinging to me even more for some reason.

Uun? Does this mean no?

「Arara. It seems both of them really love Oniisan~ In that case, we have a room with a large bed, would you like to take that room?」

So not a twin, but a double room?

From the looks of it, it's unlikely that they will sleep in a separate bed.

「Let's do that. That room with the meal, please」

Because it's needed to pay in advance, I have paid for a week for now. It's a recommended inn by the knight-samas, it's surely all right.

And then, since there's still time until the dinner, I have asked for a location of a certain place and left the inn.

Chapter 7
Shrine

The destination is a Shrine. It's roughly in the center of the town.

It's a white, stone building. Although old, the white color is preserved and the ivy crawling over the walls leaves a deep impression.

A big belfry is attached to the roof, just right now, *dong, dong*…… six chimes reverberate around the whole town.

The bell resounds every day at fixed times. It works as a clock for those who don't possess a high price magic tool. It basically substitutes a watch.

It chimes once at 6 in the morning. Then, the chime increases once every two hours, the Shrine's bell chimes until 10 in the evening where it chimes nine times.

Get up with a chime and sleep with nine. The people live around this bell.

Anyone can freely enter and exit the Shrine chapel.

The inside is spacious enough to accommodate a good number of people, a passage spreads straight to the altar in the back of the chapel from the entrance.

Oblong stools that can fit several adults each are lined along both sides of the passage, facing the altar.

A light shines from the high ceiling, illuminating the chapel.

Serenity. 5 stone statues are in the interior of the altar wrapped in such atmosphere.

A statue of a woman in the middle. This must be the God of Creation Malianor. On both sides of Malianor-sama are four statues of men. On her right-hand side, there is the Fire God Salamanteel-sama and the Earth God Nomoodle-sama. On her left-hand side, the Water God Windell-sama and Wind God Sylphreel-sama——It's Syl.

「Will you wait here for a while?」

I sit Allen and Elena on one of the stools, stand in front of the statue of Syl and look at it.

Ah, it's Syl.

The stone statue has exactly the same appearances I remember.

People normally glorify and exaggerate the appearances of a god, but it seems that the actual appearances of gods have been properly transmitted to the people of Aetherdia.

（Syl～ Can you hear me?）

I close my eyes and call Syl at once.

(Takumi-san, I can hear you)

Syl immediately answers back.

It seems my voice reached him properly.

(Did you get used to the life over there?)

(I have arrived at the town just today. So I don't think I can say I got already used to it. But, I didn't have a hard time thanks to the magic and the convenient tools)

(That is good)

Syl was really concerned about me, it felt like that.

Having people that are concerned about you is nice. It feels somewhat warming.

——However! This and that are different things!

(Right, Syl)

(What is it?)

(You didn't tell me. Isn't there something that you have to say to me?)

I can imagine Syl's body *piki~in* stiffen.

(W, what are you saying, I, I don't know~)

…… No, you are definitely shaking.

If you are going to pretend ignorance, I'm going to put on a little better performance.

(Hoho~u… I see… You don't know? Then, it can't be helped. They finally seem to taken liking to me, but if Syl doesn't know then I will have to put the poor children into an orphanage——)

(Wa, waa~!! Wait~!!

He gave up at once… I thought you were going to feign ignorance for a bit more, though~……

(I'm so~rry)

Ah, I don't see him, but he's definitely… prostrating……

◊ – ♦ – ◊

(I thought it was strange. The starting location being A rank『Gaya Forest』, after all. No matter how you look at it, you would normally start at such impossible place! But, I was able to leave the forest before encountering a strong monster. Besides, it's strange for children to be in such a place! Moreover, they are "Human?" you know? At first I thought, there's a race like that in this world~ but, when I arrived at the town and appraised the people there, everyone was a normal human, demihuman, and suchmon. I was fully suspecting you, Syl. So, what's going on?)

(Uu~)

(Don't cry and start explaining. It's not like I will get angry or anything)

Syl bursts into tears while prostrating.

Nono, you are a god, right? First… no, first is Malianor-sama so you are the second most important person, right? Why are you so brittle?

(Go on)

(It can't be said from my mouth……)

(……)

When I urge the sobbing Syl to explain, he lets out some unexpected words.

What? "Can't say"…… moreover, Syl said, "from my"…

N~…

Is he forbidden to speak?

From whom?

No… if that's the case, wouldn't that be strange?

If he imprudently spills it out, would he get in trouble…?

An existence that can forbid Syl, a god from speaking, I can think only of those four.

(Say, Syl. Wind God, Fire God, Water God, Earth God, do you share nonaggression, territory or such things…between each other?)

(…… We do)

I see. They do……

That means, there's another god who has a relation with Allen and Elena?

I don't think it's Malianor-sama. Then, it's someone between Fire, Water, and Earth…

(It's just, those children are no ordinary children, leaving them would be dangerous…… I can tell you only that)

(I understand. I won't ask anymore. Just… am I all right?)

(Takumi-san has become a part of my family, but it doesn't change the fact that you will be living on Aetherdia like a normal human so… There's just no control restriction, so there's no limit to what you can do)

(Is there no problem with you assisting me?)

(Yes. It doesn't change that Takumi-san is my family and since you have received a blessing from Malianor-sama it's only natural to offer assistance)

(So, in the end, we are using a loophole……)

Allen and Elena are related to a god. Moreover, not just followers, something more important.

It's just my conjecture since I can't get more details, though.

…… At any rate——

(…… Was my existence a godsend?)

(… You are angry…… right?)

(Speaking honestly, if only you told me right away instead of stealthily scheming…… is what I'm thinking)

(I'm really sorry……)

(It's okay already. It's okay to rely on you when I encounter trouble, right?)

(Yes! I don't mind no matter how trivial it is. Please, contact me anytime!)

(I understand. I will be relying on you at that time. Laters)

The conversation with Syl was forcibly ended in the middle.

Syl himself is hopeless, I can understand his reasoning, but I was used, after all, I couldn't erase my negative emotions.

However, I'm definitely not angry nor disappointed.

My new heart just probably didn't settle properly yet. I think there won't be any problems if I give it a while. Once it's settled, I will contact Syl again and make many demands. That will make the offset.

◊ – ♦ – ◊

「Allen, Elena. Come here」

Once my heart settled, I turn around and call the twins over.

When I call them, the two immediately trot over to me, I crouch and hold them in my arms.

「Thank you for waiting. Shall we return to the inn?」

I walk back to the inn with two smiling children in my arms and setting sun in the back.

Chapter 8
Adventurer's Guild

Good morning. Sleeping in the bed is indeed nice.

I have children on both of my sides so I can't really move, though.

Apart from that, listen to this! I didn't notice because I didn't have a mirror until now, but my eyes are green! When I saw my reflection in one of the windows, I was really startled. It's the same jade green as Syl's.

Because nothing was said regarding my appearances and I didn't request anything, so the appearances were done without my consent. Black hair was a necessity…

Maa, there are no problems if my eye color is different.

Now then, after we slowly finished breakfast, we headed to the Adventurer's Guild.

It's a building with a sign of a pentagon shield with two crossed swords.

When we enter inside, a spacious hall comes to sight. Because I came here today only to register, we set off with the third chime, but there are adventurers still loitering around here and there. Because these people are wearing armor and carrying weapons, there's no doubt that they are adventurers.

They are mostly concentrated around the bulletin board on the left side of the hall. That's most likely the place where requests are put.

Maa~ but, there's an available receptionist at the counter so I wasn't wrong to come at this time.

Without further ado, I take Allen and Elena and approach the receptionist.

「Good morning. What may I help you with?」

The female guild receptionist greets us with a sweet business smile.

「Adventurer registration, please. Ah, these children too. There's no age restriction, is there?」

When I convey my business, the receptionist looks at Allen and Elena. A surprised look appears on her face, but she immediately returns to her original expression.

Small children like these rarely come here, right?

The age of majority in this world is 15, but it's not unusual to start working earlier. Although I say that, it's just helping parents with work or routine tasks for the town. The Guild also has requests related to routine tasks for the town. However, most of the children who work like that are over 10 years old…

「Yes. There's no age restriction so registration is possible. Please fill the necessary information on this form. Do you require amanuensis[1] ?」

「No, it's all right. Thank you very much」

I give my thanks, receive the form and pen and check the contents. The necessary items to fill are the name, age, and special skill (Primary way of fighting). It's only these three items.

I have never seen the characters the form is written in before, but I properly understand them. There are no problems with writing.

After checking the form over, I fill out three papers.

For the special skills item, it's magic (Wind) for me, and hand to hand combat for Allen and Elena.

I hand the forms to the receptionist after filling them out.

「Yes, thank you very much. Please wait a moment until the card is completed」

When the receptionist miss received the forms, she checked whether there are some problems and then she started operating a crystal.

After several minutes, she lines up three credit card-like metal cards on the counter.

「Please check whether the name is correct then drip a drop of blood on the card. This will complete the registration. After the registration is completed, please check for abnormalities」

The Guild Card is a magic tool. The 『ownership』 of the card is determined by the blood and no one aside from the owner won't be able to use it.

First, I drip blood on my card and register it.

＊Takumi Kayano
＊Human
＊20 years old
＊Personal Rank F
＊Party Rank —
【Request Record】
【Dungeon Record】
【Level】11
【Skills】
Light Magic | Dark Magic | Wind Magic | Life Magic
Swordsmanship | Throwing | Appraisal | Dismantling | Gathering
Cooking | Sewing | Washing | Cleaning | Crafting | Arithmetics | Reading
Abnormal Status Resistance | Mental Status Resistance
Physical Attack Resistance | Magic Attack Resistance
【Titles】
Transmigrated From a Different World
Blessed by the God of Creation, Malianor
Friend of Wind God Sylphreel
【Money】0G

A good amount of information is written on the card.

Ah, I'm glad. It says I'm an ordinary Human.

There are 5 "＊" main entries are obligatory to display, therefore, it, fortunately, doesn't display the family. I feel relieved because the other information is optional and can be hidden. With this, only those with permission will be able to see my details.

There's a possibility that Guild staff would need to read it, but it should be all right if I just conceal the necessary details.

After that, Allen and Elena drip their blood on the cards and I don't forget to alter their settings.

「There's a fee for reissue, so please be careful of losing it. Would you like to hear the explanation about the guild?」

There's no fee to register as an adventurer, but it seems it costs 2,000G (2 Large Silver Coins) for reissue the card if lost.

I have the knowledge about the rules of the guild, but because it would be troublesome if there is some discrepancy, I request for the explanation. 『Well then』 Miss receptionist bowed and began the explanation.

First, the explanation about the ranks.

The ranks begin at F, and raising to E, D, C, B, A and S.

Rule of a thumb of the ranks——

F Rank – Newcomer
E Rank – Fledgling
D Rank – Full-fledged
C Rank – Skilled
B Rank – Superior
A Rank – Superior+α
S Rank – Hero

——Those are the standards.

In addition, there's something called a party where several people handle a single request. In that case, the Party Rank becomes the average rank of the party members.

The Requests which are located on the Request Board (Request Subject, Reward, Time Limit are written on them) you bring them from the board to the reception and once accepted, you can begin the request.

There's a recommended rank written on the Request and you are able to receive requests one rank above yours. The reward is received after completion, there is no penalty fee for failure.

The number of successful and failed requests is considered during a rank up. It's harder to rank up with too many failures and there even exists a penalty for consecutive failures.

Also, if you don't receive requests in three years, the registration will be revoked, and the registration will be disposed of if you commit vicious acts.

With the exception of materials collected for the requests, it's possible to sell monster materials, ingredients, etc. at the Guild's counter. There are fixed prices which profit the adventurers.

Of course, adventurers are free to sell their materials to individual shops, but if problems arise, the Adventurer's Guild won't get involved.

In addition, the Guild functions as a bank and the money deposited at the Guild can be withdrawn at any Guild branch in any country.

And last, the Guild does not involve in quarrels between fellow adventurers, injuries and in the worst case death are all self-responsibility. This concludes the explanation.

「This is all. Do you have any questions?」

「Yes, the party registration, please」

「I understand. Your guild cards, please」

I register me, Allen and Elena as a party at once.

The party's name is『White Wings』. I imagined angels since the children are god's relatives.

I have money that I received from Syl, but it's a finite amount, so I have to work for a steady income.

The identification papers were the purpose, but in a different world, it has to be Adventurer, right!

Therefore, I simply registered as an adventurer.

But, the problem is Allen and Elena.

It would be best if Allen and Ellen could do house-sitting when I'm on a request, but I think those two would definitely follow me.

Maa, the children are strong, they won't become a burden. If that's the case, it would be best to prepare everything right from the start.

It would be better than having them sneaking away during the house-sitting. Besides, I want those two to see various things and places!

「The registration is complete」

「Thank you very much」

「Will you receive a request today?」

「No…… ah! If I have medicinal herbs or monster materials at hand, will there be any problem using them for a request?」

「No, if the condition of the material is good, there are no problems. Do you have anything with you?」

「No, just making sure. Would it be alright to trouble you again if I have more questions later?」

「Yes. I'm responsible for reception, my name is Luna. I look forward working with you」

「Thank you very much. You probably already know, but I'm Takumi. Please treat me well」

I recalled the materials from the Gaya Forest, but as expected, a newcomer who just registered bringing out such things would bring too much attention so I gave up.

Then, after giving my thanks to the polite receptionist miss——Luna-san, I take Allen and Elena and leave the guild.

After that, I went to return the temporary identification papers to the west gate and wandered around the town aimlessly afterwards.

Footnotes

1. An **amanuensis** is a person employed to write or type what another dictates or to copy what has been written by another, and also refers to a person who signs a document on behalf of another under the latter's authority

Chapter 9
The First Job

When I wake up in the morning, Allen and Elena were already up. They are clinging on both of my sides staring at my face fixedly.

This has become a habit since our first camping in the forest.

「…… Morning」

「「……Mor… ning…」」

「!!」

They greeted me!! Allen and Elena spoke!

What adorable voices!

I who was greatly impressed hugged the two children reflectively.

◊ – ♦ – ◊

After having my fill of embracing the two, I finished preparations and we went to the guild.

It's full of people, unlike yesterday. I go towards the low-rank Request Board while Allen and Elena are tightly sticking to me in order to not get separated.

A low-rank male and female adventurers around my age are gazing at the board.

A great number of Requests are closely packed together on the board.

There are three main types of Requests.

Gathering Request——A gathering job of a specific medicinal plant or monster material.

Subjugation Request——A job to defeat a designated monster. After defeating it, a part of its body is necessary as a subjugation proof.

Escort Request——A job to escort a person/item from a town to a town or protect them in a specific location.

There are little to nothing Escort Requests for low-rankers. So I will be choosing between gathering and subjugation.

N～ what should I pick…… Would taking a gathering medicinal plants request at first be better? With that, Allen and Elena can go with me…

Thinking that, I pick one of the Requests and stand in the queue at the counter.

「The next person」

「Thank you」

My turn finally came.

The receptionist behind the counter is the same that took care of us yesterday, Luna-san.

「Ara, Takumi-san. Good morning. A Request?」

「Good morning. This is the Request, please」

「Excuse me…… A gathering of Lilie Grass, I see. Your Guild Card, please」

I hand the Request I picked to Luna-san after light greetings.

Luna-san confirmed the contents of the Request, received my Guild Card and quickly operated the crystal.

「10 Lilie Grasses is considered a batch so please be careful. The time limit is until three days later」

Luna-san explains the important points of the Request.

「Thank you very much」

While saying my thanks, I received back my Guild Card and we leave the Guild.

We go towards the south gate at once.

There is a small forest in the south of Shirin. There are no monsters aside from E, F Rank slimes, and wolves. It's a relatively safe area so it's just the right place for newcomers and unskilled adventurers.

「Allen, Elena. This is the Lilie Grass」

After getting to the forest, I immediately find the Lilie Grass and show it to children. It has a dark green stalk with several jagged maple-like leaves.

The Lilie roots aren't necessary so I cut the stalk and pick it up without the roots.

「If you find it, gather it like this. Understood?」

After Allen and Elena nod, they start searching the area for Lilie Grass at once.

They found it immediately. They timidly hold it in their tiny hands and trot over to me.

They uneasily look at me while holding out the Lilie Grass to me.

「It's all right, this is the one. You did great~」

I pat the two children's heads and receive the Lilie Grass while praising them.

Happy for being praised, *kya, kya* they make a merry and run off looking for another Lilie Grass.

I'm glad. It seems that their emotions and voices are returning little by little.

I feel relieved that they are growing in the right direction.

Now then, I should also start looking around~

I found the plant right after I began the search.

Oh, Cren Grass and Maryoku Grass are also there. There was a request for that too if I'm not mistaken. Let's gather that too. Even if the Request won't be there anymore, I can just store it in the《Infinite Storage》for the time being.

Thinking that, I gather one plant after another.

Along the way, Allen and Elena learned the characteristics of the various plants I was picking and also started looking for them.

Our gathering in the forest continues until the noon and the prepared jute bag was full of gathered medicinal plants.

We gathered a sufficient amount.

「Allen, Elena. Let's stop for today」

When I call the two, they trot over to me with hands full of medicinal plants.

「You both gathered so much~ Amazing~」

When I praise them after receiving the plants, the two children make joyful expressions.

So cute~ The two laughed a lot today.

「Yosh, let's return to town after eating a meal」

We left the forest, sat in the middle of a meadow with a great scenery, and returned to the town after eating the food I bought at the stall in the town.

◊ – ♦ – ◊

When we return to the Guild, I go straight to the Request Board and look for Requests with other medicinal plants.

Umm… Cren Grass, Maryoku Grass, oh, Fenze Grass is also there.

I pick the Requests after comparing the gathered plants with the Requests. I have many plants that are insufficient numbers so I decide to store them in《Infinite Storage》and go to the counter.

「Welcome back」

The one who greeted me at the counter was Luna-san again.

「We have returned. These Requests in addition to the Request we have received this morning」

「I will confirm. Put the materials in this basket please」

After exchanging greetings, I put the Guild Card together with the new Requests on the counter. Luna-san received them and took out a basket.

I place the medicinal plants into that basket. Because all kinds of medicinal plants were in the 10 Requests I picked, I line them up while counting.

「… Y, you have quite a lot. It's quite difficult to gather this much in half a day…」

「It's because the children did their best」

The medicinal plants turned into a heap because the basket is unexpectedly small.

Luna-san was a slightly surprised at the amount of medicinal plants I took out, but she promptly started checking the medicinal plants.

「This is this time's reward」

Once the confirmation of the medicinal plants is done, the reward money is presented. I confirm the amount of money at the counter and put them into a bag.

And when I think of returning——

「Why are brats in here!」

A large, bald adventurer comes over while shouting.

Chapter 10
Template?

「Why are brats in here!」

A loud voice echoes around the Guild.

That voice gathers the attention of the other people around.

「They are my company, is there a problem?」

「This is not a place for brats to play!」

「No… they are obediently behaving, right? I don't think they are being a nuisance to you, but?」

「There are nuisance just by being here!」

「Just by being here, you say…… give me a break…」

This is the type of person who would pick up a fight no matter what I say. I'm certain my words won't connect with him.

I would like to settle this peacefully, but…… now then, how to deal with this……

I wanted to sigh, but I forcibly suppressed it. The opponent seems to be the type that would get even more agitated by it.

Nevertheless, to think that there would actually be person who would pick a quarrel for no reason…… I thought this would happen only in novels.

「Oi! Don't ignore me!」

「No, I told you…」

「Aan!? Are you defying me right now?」

The opponent suddenly extends his hands and grasb me by the collar without a thought.

Ah, it's no use no matter what I say. Talking is impossible.

Now then…… what to do……

While thinking so, the hand that was grabbing me was suddenly repelled.

「Ah…」

When I let the voice, it was already too late.

Allen and Elena kicked the bald adventurer's hand away. Then, they proceed to kick him in the abdomen just like that.

The adventurer let's out『Gu!』a suffering groan while his upper body bent. He then fell back right on his backside.

「Uwa! Stop, stop! Allen, Elena. Wait!」

I shout in panic.

I stop Allen and Elena a second before they can both land ax kick on the collapsed adventurer's head.

The kicks that were going to land directly on his head just barely swept beside him.

That was dangerous… seriously dangerous…

He would definitely die if those ax kicks landed.

His upper body fall down with a thud and he stopped moving. He must have already fainted after suffering the hit to his abdomen.

A silence drifts in the Guild which was noisy just a minute ago.

The adventurers and the Guild staff stiffened in shock.

Even if they are used to fighting, witnessing small children KO'ing a grown man must have been really surprising.

Well then…… what do I do now?

「Ou. Excuse me…… N? What?」

A person walks into the guild and looks around the stiffened adventurers and guild staff dumbfoundedly.

「What, what? Did something happen?」

A familiar voice. If I'm not mistaken, it should be one of the west gate Knight-samas.

He is not wearing armor today, but a dark blue knight uniform.

Thanks to him, the stopped time in the Guild started moving again.

First of all, I turn to the Guild staff behind the counter and timidly ask.

「Ah～…… Is there a punishment in a case like this?」

I can't leave without asking that, right?

◊ – ♦ – ◊

There was no punishment.

This time, we were not at fault because the other party one-sidedly picked a quarrel with us and we only defended ourselves.

I'm glad…

The fallen adventurer was dragged to the guild's sick bay by other adventures on the guild staff instructions, he started moving again normally after a while.

「This~ Takumi-san…」

「Yes?」

「See…… the children……」

「He?」

Luna-san reservedly calls out to me. Prompted by those words, I turn around to look at Allen and Ellen…… they were crying.

There were shedding tears without a voice.

「Waa!? Why are you crying!?」

I rush up to the two children in panic and crouch to match their line of sight.

「Injuries… none, right? What's wrong?」

「…… Don't… leave us……」

They cling to me with a fragile voice.

Leave? Why?

Perhaps, is it because I raised my voice a little while ago? Are those two uneasy because of that?

They thought I was angry at them…

「There's no way I would leave you? It's all right, okay?」

I embrace the crying children while repeating『It's all right』『We are together』 in a gentle voice.

It took about ten minutes for those two to calm down.

「Here, you must be thirsty, right?」

Still sobbing a little, I hand the two a fruit juice.

They cried a lot, I must let them rehydrate properly.

「In the end, what has happened?」

Ah, Knight-sama, you are still here…

The Knight-sama from the west gate is the second commanding officer of Shirin Knight's, a noble named Grunwald Ruven.

A captain of one of five Shirin's divisions. The second most important person in the Shirin Knights. It seems he came today to talk to the Guild Master.

Status
【Name】Grunwald Ruven
【Race】Human
【Occupation】Knight
【Age】26
【Level】32
【Skills】
Swordsmanship | Spearmanship | Throwing | Fire Magic
Horseback Riding | Dismantling | Commanding
Etiquette | Dancing
Physical Attack Resistance
【Titles】
Count Ruven's Second Son
Knight of the Flaming Sword

Un, he has the skills appropriate of a noble knight-sama.

Indeed, a knight should be about riding a horse and swinging weapons around. Besides,【Commanding】. Un, I feel like it's necessary for a captain.

【Etiquette】and【Dancing】is noble-ish.

The title【Knight of the Flaming Sword】sounds cool~ Looking at the name, is it about using a sword enhanced with Fire Magic?

…… Oops, he asked a question.

「They probably thought I would abandon them」

「Haa? What's that about? You, would you do such a thing?」

「I won't do anything like that! Please don't such something so disgraceful」

「Then, why are they thinking so?」

「No~ I didn't perfectly grasp the understanding yet, I still don't understand well~」

That's the truth. I don't know their circumstances before meeting me at that place.

「They are your children…… probably not, they are your sibling, aren't they?」

「Unfortunately, they are not. I have just met these children recently. To be precise, a week ago? They were in the Gaya Forest」

「Haa?」

「If they were discarded or just lost, I do not know, though」

「Seriously?」

「Yeah. Wasn't there recently a carriage attacked near the Gaya Forest or something? They were most likely slaves」

Weren't they sold as slaves because they don't have parents? Is what I think. After all, if they were in the orphanage, I wouldn't meet them in a place like that.

「…… There certainly was. A Slave Trader from the Argo was attacked by monsters in the Gaya Forest while heading to this town」

Luna-san immediately recalls the information.

「Ah, as expected. They were probably made into a decoy」

「Children like these…」

「It doesn't look like they were the ones to become the decoy in the end, though. In this case, how are these children going to be treated? There won't be problems if I take them in, right? Fortunately, they don't have any proof of being slaves」

「In that case, they are simply treated as orphans.There won't be problems to put them into orphanage or raise them yourself.。Besides, it looks like these children completely recognize you as their guardian. If you'd like, I will guarantee you」

「Ruven-sama, thank you very much」

I was worried about the interference from the merchant, but it doesn't seem like there will be problems.

It seems like Ruven-sama will become the guarantee.

「Wald is all right. Apart from that——」

「Rather than that, Takumi-san! You went into the Gaya Forest?」

Luna-san interrupts Ruven-sama who said it's okay to call him Wald-sama, and she bends forward over the counter.

Chapter 11
Takumi's Strength

「Rather than that, Takumi-san! You went into the Gaya Forest?」

「Eh?」

「What's going on!!」

「… Yes. There were medicinal plants I needed」

What an amazingly angry look……

Gaya Forest…… was there such settings?

「Is the reason you asked about the materials at hand when you came first to the Guild possibly…」

Ah, she noticed. Luna-san, you remember it…

「Do you have them?」

「……」

What to do?

Luna-san is staring at me with a great vigor. No…… no those are eyes looking at a prey……

「You have them, right? …… Right?」

「…… Yes」

Chills ran through my back for some reason.

In the end, I was completely defeated by Luna-san's insight.

Therefore, I decided to sell the materials I obtained in Gaya Forest.

As expected, because a number of days passed since then, I keep silent about the materials in the《Infinite Storage》and decided to sell only the one processed Red Wolf's magic stone, fur, claws, fangs, and medicinal plants and fruits.

There wasn't much, but Guild staff including Luna-san were overjoyed.

There are many calm zones in the outskirts of Shirin except Gaya Forest. The security is tight, the flow of people is high because the town is near the borders, but there doesn't seem to be many veteran adventurers.

There are only a few adventurers who recently went to Gaya Forest so the stock of advanced materials significally decreased, Luna-san earnestly explained.

「Which reminds me, Wald-sama. Didn't you come to talk with Guild Master?」

「Yeah, regarding an expedition. We periodically go to the Gaya Forest to thin out the monsters. If left alone, the monsters would start pouring out which would be really troubling」

「Is it a joint expedition of knights and high ranked adventures?」

「Yeah. The number of people I can take is limited because I can't take everyone along. If I don't go into the depths, I won't have enough people」

「It's an A Rank forest, after all～」

「Because of that, Takumi. You are participating」

Haa? What are you talking about?

「Nono, I'm an F Rank, you know!?」

「If you are able to go alone and defeat a Red Wolf there are no problems, right?」

「……」

Crap, I made a mistake. I shouldn't take out the Red Wolf materials!

「Oh, it looks that Guild Master is free now. I will make an official request later, don't run away」

「Wa, wait!」

Saying just that, Wald-sama walks into the Guild Master's office.

「…… I can reject a designated request, right?」

I ask Luna-san after a while of silence.

「It's not impossible. But, when it comes to official request from the Knights, it becomes a request of the country so……」

Why did your voice become cloudy at the end!? Please confirm that I can decline!

Why did it become like this? Where did I make a mistake?

Where? I did take out the Red Wolf materials, right……

Uwaa, it's my fault! Aah, mou…

「Anyway, I'm going home for today……」

「Yes, thank you for your hard work」

「Allen, Elena. We are leaving~」

I lift the two who are still uneasy and leave towards the inn.

◊ – ♦ – ◊

——Inside the Guild Master's office.

「Ruven-dono, sorry for the wait」

The one greeting is a grizzled elderly man. This man is precisely the Guild Master of Guardia's Shirin Adventurer's Guild branch.

「No problem. It's I who should apologize for coming during busy times」

Grunwald sits on a sofa, facing the Guild Master. A female staff member puts a cup of tea in front of them, she then bows and quietly leaves the room.

「Nono. Are you here today regarding the subjugation expedition to Gaya Forest?」

「That's right. As usually, I will leave the arrangements of adventures to you. The time planned is at the beginning of the Fourth Month for one week」

「I understand. I will prepare the request immediately」

「Ah, in addition, please include a nomination for a person named Takumi Kayano this time」

「Takumi Kayano… is it? I'm not familiar with that name, but…」

The business advanced smoothly as usually. But, Grunwald had one more request that is different from the usual.

Grunwald smiled at the Guild Master with a mysterious grin.

「He's an F Rank newcomer who has registered to the Guild just recently. It's only natural that Guild Master doesn't know of him」

「You want to include a new adventurer to the expedition to Gaya Forest?」

「Although a newcomer, he's no amateur」

Grunwald recalls the moment Takumi came to the town for the first time and the another meeting from today.

He's an ordinary youth at glance. But, he perceived an extraordinary presence from that youth. It was only his intuition as an experienced fighter, though.

「He caught your eyes, is what you are saying?」

「I'm interested a bit. Therefore, three parties as usual plus one, please」

Besides, the children that are with the youth. They are no ordinary children.

Although he didn't see it directly, according to the people who saw, those children destroyed a giant man in an instant.

That was enough for Grunwald to show interest.

Incorporating them into a party made of A Rank and B Rank adventurers…

The subjugation expedition in Gaya Forest that Grunwald always considered troublesome. He can't help it, but to look forward to the due date this time. That is the face Grunwald is making.

◊ – ♦ – ◊

Later, an official request from the Knights arrived.

The designated request with all the details was handed to me by Luna-san.

Nono, please don't look at me with that smile!

I will decline…… eh? To decline, I have to go directly to the Knights? No way… that's impossible…… I understand. I will start preparing…

Eh? Please bring a lot of advanced materials, you say…… Luna-san……

Idle Talk 1
Warmth

Stomach, empty.

Cold.

Painful.

Before I noticed, imouto, together.

Dark, cold, place.

Morning? and night? Twice.

The muddy food, I ate a bit.

After that, only motionlessly, sitting.

I, how long, remain here?

I want to get out, from here.

Outside, let me out.

◊ – ♦ – ◊

「You damned brats, get out!」

I can leave?

When I go out, a carriage? I was placed in.

Where, to?

◊ – ♦ – ◊

Rattlerattle, it drives.

Unknown, place.

Where, being taken to?

「Monsters! What happened to the escort!」

「There are too many! They are coming this way」

「Tsk! Can’t be helped. Use the brats and escape. Throw away one!」

Ah, stop.

What are you doing, to imouto.

「Oi, one is enough for the decoy」

No.

Not leaving.

「Stop dilly-dallying. Both are fine, hurry up! We are leaving」

◊ – ♦ – ◊

Pain.

Something, coming.

Have to escape.

◊ – ♦ – ◊

Someone, here?

What to do?

Take, a look?

「Are you lost? Did you come here alone?」

Unpleasant, feeling not here.

A good person, perhaps?

With magic, made our bodies clean.

Injuries, healed too.

Gentle, person, I wonder?

「Here, eat up」

To eat, is okay?

For us?

…… Delicious.

◊ – ♦ – ◊

I am, Allen.

Imouto, is, Elena.

Names, we received.

Happy.

Good boy, he pats, my head.

Tightly, he embraces us.

Warm.

◊ – ♦ – ◊

Delicious, meals, gives us a lot.

Sleeps, together.

When wakes up, good morning, he says.

Good boy, he praises me.

A gentle, face.

Warm, hands.

Oniichan, I love.

Al~ways.

For~ever, together, want to stay.

◊ – ♦ – ◊

Release, Oniichan!

「Allen, Elena. Wait!」

Angry?

I, did something, bad?

I am sorry.

「…… Don’t… leave us……」

No.

Stay together.

Don’t abandon us.

「There’s no way I would leave you? It’s all right, okay?」

Really?

Be, together, is okay?

Stay, with Oniichan, is, okay?

I will be, a good boy.

From now on, always, together!

Chapter 12
To the Dungeon

Few days after Allen and Elena KO'ed the bald adventurer.

At present, we do Requests for two days and take one day off. I'm taking on Requests like this in order to not burden the children's bodies. We were able to steadily raise our ranks to E.

Status
【Name】Takumi Kayano
【Race】Human?［Wind God's retainer (Temporary)］
【Occupation】Mage
【Age】20
【Level】13
【Skills】
Light Magic 52 | Dark Magic 51
Wind Magic 157 | Space Magic 109
Life Magic 124
Swordsmanship 50 | Throwing 34
Appraisal 202 | Dismantling 117
Cooking 92 | Sewing 23
Washing 12 | Cleaning 31
Crafting 37 | Gathering 13
Concealment 22 | Detection 12
Arithmetics 107 | Reading 125
Oracle 8
Physical Attack Resistance 300 | Magic Attack Resistance 300
【Titles】
Transmigrated From a Different World
Blessed by the God of Creation, Malianor
Friend of Wind God Sylphreel
Savior

We defeat monsters on the side while doing Gathering Requests, my level slightly rose, my skills and skill proficiencies increased slightly.

I even obtained a【Savior】title.

Did I receive it only by being together with Allen and Elena?

I don't know what the standards are, but obtaining titles is not as surprising as meeting with a god, therefore I decided to leave it be for the time being.

◊ – ♦ – ◊

「Takumi-san, are you not going to a dungeon?」

We came to the guild right in the morning today.

Luna-san inquiries while I view the Request Board while looking for a good Request.

「Dungeon…… ah!!」

Dungeons are all over Aetherdia. I don't know to what extent the people of this world know about dungeons, but there exist 108 dungeons in total.

Dungeons difficulty is determined by the number and variety of the monsters inside, the floors are divided into a bottom, middle and high levels.

Although people are aware of dungeon's existence, there are still many undiscovered dungeons. As for how the dungeon's difficulty is determined……

It's determined by the existence and efficiency of dungeon's transfer devices.

Beginner Class——No transfer device.

Intermediate Class——Transfer devices are installed every ten floors.

Advanced Class——Transfer device on each floor.

Such easy to understand criteria are in effect.

Because it seems that capturing a single floor of Advanced dungeon takes up to several days, it wouldn't be possible to easily capture the dungeon without transfer devices.

In addition, it's unknown how the dungeons work, but the monster defeated in them don't leave corpses behind. Instead, defeated monsters leave behind a part of materials——they are leaving behind a Drop Item.

You never know what Drop Item will be left behind.

If you defeat Red Wolf, it's materials, claws, fangs or meat… you have no choice but to defeat many to get what you need.

Also, it's possible that a rare item would drop. Some amazing medicine can be obtained.

Maa~ it happens only rarely.

There is a 15-floors deep Low dungeon near Shirin.

「I totally forgot their existence. No wonder we rarely bump into other adventurers outside the town」

「Is that so? I was certain you didn't want to go because of the children. You are very helpful because you are taking on Requests on non-dungeon materials, though」

「You mean that most of the adventurers are going to the dungeon?」

「Yes. Most of the adventurers, up to D-Rank go to the nearby dungeon. The adventurers above D-Rank mostly take on Escort Requests. Truthfully, only a few newcomers go to the outskirts of the town」

The monsters near the town aren't a big deal. You must make a few days trip to arrive at a place with strong monsters.

「The dungeon is a half day on foot from here, after all」

Half a day, huh… it's surprisingly close.

Going to the dungeon certainly enables making more money than going to the outskirts.

「Then, should we also go to take a look~」

「Eh!? You are going?」

Luna-san gets surprised at my muttering.

「We can't?」

「Nono, that's not it. It's just the designated Request for Gaya Forest is next week, so I was thinking if it's not too hard timewise……」

「Ah. You could say I intended only to take a look at the bottom floors before challenging, so we should have plenty of time, right? If I deduct a day off before the designated Request and the travel time, we should be diving just for three days」

Because the traveling may increase with Allen and Elena traveling with me, we will be able to dive at least for three days.

It's plenty of time for sightseeing, right?

「I think so. Fufu. When it comes to Takumi-san and the children I was under the selfish impression that you would "capture" it straight away」

「You are expecting too much from E-Rank adventueres」

「Ara, not at all. It's not just me, it's the evaluation of the entire Guild, you know?」

I have a feeling that the Guild's expectations got heavy since the incident on the day of our first Request.

Even though I was just a human that didn't stand out at all on Earth, I have a feeling that it's the exact opposite on Aetherida.

I stopped being normal the moment I became a god's retainer, though……

I just can't get used to it.

I left the guild with such complicated thoughts and purchased the necessities (mainly food).

After that, I informed the『Komadori Pavilion』couple that we will be going out for a few days and headed towards the dungeon.

◊ – ♦ – ◊

There was still some time until sunset when we arrived at the dungeon.

The plan was to arrive in the evening, stay overnight and go to the dungeon the next day.

This happened because Allen and Elena walked better than I expected. Their pace was fast with small steps.

There's no need to hurry that much, I told them, but the two didn't lower their pace. In addition, their stamina is better than that of an ordinary adult so we have arrived earlier.

Now then, what should we do?

The fourth dungeon, "Dungeon of Earth".

A 15-floor underground dungeon with an earth attribute. A dungeon with relatively high capture rate.

The entrance to the dungeon is hollowed in a two-story large rock.

From there, a sloping road spreads out. It's wide enough to fit three adult men. The depths are not fully visible.

Spend a night here as planned or to enter the dungeon nearly……

「In」

「Go～」

While considering what to do, Allen and Elena exclaim.

「Is it really okay? Are you not tired?」

「「Is al～right」」

Since the two say they are okay, I decided to go inside. I will only watch their condition properly and take a break before they get fatigued.

I illuminate the surroundings with《Light》before descending. I can keep on the《Light》for one hour before having to cast it again. As it can only illuminate the surroundings in 1m radius, I locked hands with Allan and Elena and started walking.

「Looks like a normal tunnel, huh」

There is a hall further down. A hall that looks like a tunnel in a large mine.

The walls and floor are made from earth, but it seems to be very sturdy as it's not easily damaged. In addition, it's wide enough to swing a sword in all directions. The route in the distance seems to be complicated as a maze, though.

The first straight path comes to an end quickly. It splits into two passages.

Allen and Elena restlessly look at the passages.

Speaking of mazes, walking along one side of the wall will bring us to an exit (the previous path in this situation) without problems… what to do?

The Guild is selling the dungeon map, but it's only accurate up to the fifth floor so I didn't purchase it.

Ah, which reminds me, wasn't there a map function in the menu?

I open the window screen at once.

N~ there's no map while inside a dungeon. There's auto mapping function instead. It displays only the way we went.

But, with this, we won't lose our way no matter which road we go and we will be able to easily return back.

If that's the case… let's let the children choose the way.

「Allen, Elena. Which way do you want to go?」

「「? …… That way~」」

They point in the same direction at the same time.

Then, let's go that way first!

Chapter 13
Dungeon of Earth • Capture 1

Proceeding in the directions Allen and Elena have picked, we quickly found stairs leading below.

Looking at the map, this is possibly the shortest way.

In addition, the two children's opinion which way to take didn't differ even once. They are demonstrating the twin power to its fullest.

Beshi.

Dokan.

Zuruzuru…

Batain.

Allen's and Elena's exploding kicks.

It gets blown off and crashes into the wall.

It slides to the ground just like that.

It ceased to breathe.

How many times did I see the exact same scene…

Un. There's no enemy! Hahaha.

Because the monsters in the Low Class dungeon aren't that strong, I let Allen and Elena deal with them as they see fit.

Thereupon, all Slimes, Ground Moles, Ground Spiders (Indeed, this being "Dungeon of Earth" the monsters that appear are mainly that of earth attribute) who appeared …… were defeated one by one.

For now, I let the kids run wild, but such training in the future, would it still be okay? Being strong is not a bad thing. Especially in this world where the average lifespan is shorter than on Earth.

They are still small, so it's okay, right? In Japan, they would be in pre-schoolers. Pre-schoolers should be playing vigorously, right?

Once they grow up a little more, I will start teaching them, or let them attend school! Everything would be all right then!

We have arrived at the 5th floor without an accident; there is a small room, so I decided to call it a day and camp there.

First, I clean their bodies with《Washing》. They are not that dirty, but keeping hygiene is good.

Next is the dinner preparation.

I take out portable stove magic tool. Maa~ it's similar to a tabletop electric cooking device. Although it's not running on electricity, but on fire magic stones. I have found this magic tool while walking around the town. This was the only magic tool for a reasonable price. But, even if the price weren't reasonable, I would buy it on the spot because of the convenience.

I put a pot with soup on top of the magic tool and warm it up.

I asked the『Komadori Pavilion』boss if he could cook something for me and this is it. It's soup with a tomato base, lots of meat and various vegetables.

The sweetness and acidity are refreshing.

Then, I made a potato salad with a fresh bread I bought back in the town. Unfortunately, they didn't have a square bread, therefore I had to use a round one.

Un, seems good! Well then, itadakimasu.

After eating the dinner, it's preparations to sleep.

That being said, my sleeping posture is leaning on the wall while sitting wrapped in a blanket with two children clinging to my sides. The same as in Gaya Forest.

Normally, it would be necessary to set up a barrier with Barrier Stones. It's a defensive measure against both monsters and humans. Bandits for example. Also, I'm afraid to say that nasty adventurers also exist. They would attack an unwatched place and steal all your belongings.

But, I'm the only one of us who can stand a watch. I have a feeling that my body would be able to go on without sleep for a few days, but I have no intention of trying it out.

It's all right. We will definitely wake up when a person with ill intent approaches us.

That being said, good night.

◊ – ♦ – ◊

The next day, the second day.

When I wake up my eyes, Allen and Elena were already up and staring fixedly at my face while clinging to my arms as usual.

I fix my clothes and prepare a simple breakfast.

The menu is sausage and scrambled eggs, fresh bread with strawberry jam.

The sausage and eggs are quickly cooked. The strawberry jam is something Syl prepared for me, made in Japan.

There's a proper product information-like paper on the jar, but its contents are written with Aetherdia's letters. And, there is **MADE IN JAPAN** written on it.

Did Syl intentionally replace it? To be sensible to such degree……

Maa, we three gratefully consumed it.

We took a little break after the breakfast and commenced the capturing of the 5th floor.

We advanced smoothly just like on the first four floors without change.

The Dropped Items weren't too expensive, but the amount is significant.

There's no problem if you have a Magic Bag, but there are probably many low ranked adventurers who still don't have it. If that's the case, they would probably start sorting out their stuff and dispose of the rest. They probably think it's all right to dispose of it

since the market price is low~ Particularly, this “Slime Jelly” which doesn’t look like it has a use…

What is this used for? It’s squishy and cool, it’s pleasing to touch.

Can this be used for mattress or cushion? Doesn’t it sound lovely? Yosh, let’s try making it if I find time.

First of all,《Infinite Storage》may fertilize it, but I don’t know its use so I will put it together with everything else.

Speaking of baggage, Allen and Elena are fundamentally empty-handed. I want to keep the things they have at them at minimum if they separate from me by any chance~ I don’t have plans to get separated, and there is no problem to start looking for them if they do immediately, but things like money… water, and preserved food. And a knife would also be good to have~

But, all that packed in a bag would get in the way during a close combat… Besides, it would be heavy~

Should I get some low-class Magic Bags for the kids? But, isn’t it dangerous for children to carry expensive magic tools around?

Yosh! Let’s ponder about this matter a bit more!

Beshi.

Dokan.

Zuruzuru…

Batain.

Ah, a wolf flew again.

The enemies are still lacking. We keep on advancing at steady pace.

◊ – ♦ – ◊

The capturing proceeds and we are currently on the 8th floor. We have captured half of the dungeon.

The quality of the monsters increased a little. An insect monster with a hard shell that Allen and Elena can't defeat in one hit has started appearing.

The kids have a bad affinity with insect monsters, unlike the usual animal type. Although they won't get defeated, they will hurt their bodies by hitting that hard shell over and over again, so I decided to take care of the insects myself.

In addition, the monsters have stopped appearing alone and started attacking in groups. From small groups of 2~3 up to a big group of around 10.

We don't have any problems, but the first obstacle for the young adventurers is most likely this 8th floor.

While advancing——

「Uwa————!!」

A cry echoes from ahead.

「Please run a~way!!」

The desperate cry was from a party of adventurers. A party of young men and women in their teens.

A group of monsters is chasing the party. Wolves, Horn Rabbits and Slicer Bats, tens of various monsters in a group.

「Wa, hey! What are you doing!?」

A young adventurer stops right after passing us and shouts at us in panic.

“I want to escape quickly” and “We should have left it alone” emotions were transmitted to me from his expression.

「《Wind Cutter》」

When all people in my field of vision disappear, and all in front of me are monsters, I cast wind magic while emphasizing the magic power behind it.

Several wind blades pour on the monsters who changed the target on us.

Un, most of them got defeated.

However, a monster slips from within the cloud of dust. But, at that moment, Allen and Elena charge towards the monster and drive a kick into its body without reserve.

「Eeeeeeeeh———!!」

The young adventurers who witnessed that shout in disbelief.

Chapter 14
Dungeon of Earth • Capture 2

「「Picked up~」」

Allen and Elena collect drop items and run up to me with their small hands full.

They seem to properly remember what I was doing in the seven floors until now.

「Thank you. Are you unhurt?」

I receive the items and pat the two children's head who nod.

「Oniichan will go and have a talk with these people, can you two go and pick up more in the meantime?」

「「Un!」」

There are still many drop items the two weren't able to carry so when I request them to pick them up, the two energetically answer me. They look overjoyed. To think they would be so happy just because of my request, these children are seriously cute! I pass a jute bag to the kids, tell them to put the items in that and send them off.

Then, I turn around and look back at the boys and girls adventurers who were escaping.

「Now then, have you activated a trap?」

「We are terribly sorry!」

They are not prostrating as Syl normally does, but the boys and girls are bowing down enough that their body height halved.

They seem to understand correctly.

The adventurers have unspoken rules.

To explain it simply——

・The monster priority goes to the party/adventurer who attacked it first.

・Drop item belongs to the one who defeats the monster. However, if he leaves it without picking it up, it's considered as abandoned and other adventurers can pick it up without a complaint.

・Interfering is prohibited unless asked for help.

These are the unspoken rules.

In addition to these, there's one more important thing. Only this one unlike other is considered a crime.

That is——

・Monster scapegoating act.

It's considered the most vicious act.

The scapegoating act these boys and girls did——is a crime.

The act of running away from a monster and involving a nearby person on the way happened quite frequently in the past.

That is still not that bad.

What is even worse is, pulling an aggro and deliberately scapegoating another person. The case of where the scapegoat died are many. With the scapegoat dying, they will then defeat the wounded monster themselves.

Because these things occurred so frequently, it's now being treated as a crime.

「Maa, I understand you didn't do it on purpose」

These boys and girls probably ran away because they really felt in danger. The monsters weren't that strong, but these children couldn't handle it because there were dozens of them.

Besides, I wouldn't be so forgiving if they escaped after passing us, but they properly stopped and told us to run away. That earned them a good evaluation from me.

「…… Yes. There was a hidden room and when we opened it to take a look……」

「Hidden room, huh. That has triggered the defense mechanism… You seem to be reflecting on your mistake, so I won't pursue this matter anymore. I will overlook it this time, but be more careful in the future, okay?」

It's not like we suffered any damage, and they seem to be reflecting on it. Therefore I won't noisily nag them anymore.

At any rate, to think Low-Class dungeon also has traps~

We have ignored hidden rooms on the way so far. Bottom floors of Low-Class dungeon surely don't have anything worthwhile, so we went without looking for them.

「「Many~!」」

Just when we finished speaking, Allen and Elena trotted over with bag full of materials.

「Thanks you. Are you not tired?」

「「We al~right」」

I receive the bag full of materials and pat the children's heads.

「「Ah! There~」」

「N?」

「Uwaaa! A Poison Spider!!」

Allen and Elena point at the ceiling while having their heads patted.

I look up and see a Poison Spider hanging there.

The boys and girls look towards the place Allen and Elena are pointing and make a fuss.

As the name suggest Poison Spider is a 1m dark red venomous spider. It doesn't have a lethal poison, but it's poison will inflict strong paralyzation.

This spider excels at stealth, it will bite a person from behind, once the person stops moving it will capture him/her in its thread, and it will bring the person back to its nest still alive.

The poison can be immediately detoxified if there are companions around, but if alone, the venomous bite will become fatal. Therefore, this monster is responsible for many adventurer fatalities.

「《Air Shot》」

I hit the Poison Spider hanging from the ceiling with magic. The crushed Poison Spider falls to the ground and turns into a drop item. The Poison Spider's drop item seems to be its poison. For some reason, it was already in a bottle when it fell to the ground.

Dungeon is really a mysterious place. Just where did this bottle appeared from……

「…… It was defeated immediately」

「N? The Poison Spider doesn't have that much fighting ability if you are careful of its stealth, right?」

「Nono, you can't defeat it that quickly. First, we can't even reach it!」

「Well, it's impossible with a sword, but don't you have someone who can use magic in the party? If you don't, you should have someone with a bow or throwing knives, right?」

「That is……」

There may not be anyone who can use magic by the swords hanging from everyone's waist. However, if done right, even these boys and girls should be able to defeat a Poison Spider.

Even if they can't beat it in one blow, it's possible to defeat the Poison Spider with a well-placed arrow or a knife.

「I don't see anyone carrying a bow which leaves throwing…… do you perhaps lack a long distance attack?」

「As expected, is that bad?」

Children of this age probably think that magic and bow is too dull compared to a sword.

「No. It's not like it's absolutely indispensable. But, I believe it will increase the broadness of attacks you can use. The offensive power may be certainly lower than that of a sword, but it has a potential to shoot stuff down just like I did earlier, and it's also usable to distract the opponent. Besides, you don't need to abandon your primary weapon with throwing knives. It's also all right to use stones instead of throwing knives」

「…… Stones. I see!」

「Arrows and Throwing Knives are consumables, after all. Purchasing them at lower ranks is hard」

Arrows and Throwing knives are cheap but fragile. They may get ruined after a single use. Their costs would then start piling up.

Of course, there are more durable ones, but they are something that low ranked adventurers can't possibly get.

In comparison, stones on the ground are free. Depending on the size and hardness, a stone can become a satisfactory weapon.

「Ah, again~」

「Kita~」

Allen and Elena found another Poison Spider on the ceiling.

「Allen will throw~」

「Elena too~」

「N?」

Saying that, both Allen and Elena pick up a baseball size stone from the ground…… and throw.

——*Dokon!*

Eh!?

A loud noise of a direct hit resounds.

It doesn't look like it was enough to finish it, but the Poison Spider falls on the ground while twitching.

「「It fell~!」」

『Eeeh!?』

The boys and girls let out shocked voices at the sight of the Poison Spider getting hit by children younger than them.

Ah, this reminds me, the two have a throwing skill… it also seems to have a reasonable proficiency.

The twitching Poison Spider stops moving and transforms into a drop item. It died.

「These children……」

The boys and girls are in a great shock.

Un. Allen and Elena are extraordinary. You must not compare yourselves to them!

We parted from the boys and girls who returned to the surface and resumed the capturing.

Chapter 15
Dungeon of Earth • Capture 3

We have advanced smoothly through 8~10 floors with few short breaks.

The number of people coming in and out on these floors steadily decreased, and the hidden rooms and treasure chest we discovered are scarce.

The contents of the treasure chests were Low-grade Stamina and Mana potions. Stamina potion is a magic potion that replenishes stamina while Mana potion is used by mages to recover magical power. They are the game's standard items.

They come in Low grade, Medium grade, High grade and Special grade, the quality and amount of recovery increases the higher the grade is.

The ones we obtained are of Low Grade so their recovery power isn't that great. But, magic potions itself are expensive goods and are precious drops for adventurers in this dungeon.

「「That way~」」

I'm afraid to say that I have come all the way here without being tired or feeling a loss of magic power, though…

Maa~ there might be a time where they will be useful so let's set them aside without selling them.

Speaking of magic potions, a magic potion that cures diseases and wounds, a Healing potion also exists on Aetherdia. In addition to drinking, it can also be apparently used directly on the wound. Furthermore, potions used for detoxifications and potions that temporarily increase physical strength also exist.

There also is a secret medicine among the Healing potions. Maa, you won't be able to see one easily, though. The secret medicine can heal any incurable diseases and

apparently even restore lost limbs. I'd rather connect the torn off arm than grow a new one……

N~ I want to see it, I don't want to see it… a complicated feeling.

The items in my possessions are generic drugs like medicine for cold and stomach medicine, but I don't have any Healing potions. I think there won't be any problems since I have a Healing magic, but I would like to get my hands on one just in case.

「「Here~」」

Oh! The two children found stairs leading to the next floor.

◊ – ♦ – ◊

The moment we descended on the 11th floor, a Wild Ape has leaped towards us.

「Kiiiii一一!」

Wild Ape is an orangutan-like monster.

Despite the sudden attack, Allen and Elena pour kicks on the Wild Ape straight away.

The Wild Ape crashes into a wall. The Wild Ape who was suddenly flung against a wall in counterattack looks dumbfounded.

Allen and Elena pursuit that momentary opening. The defenseless Wild Ape ceased to breathe under the twins' kicks.

It's neck evidently snapped……

The Wild Ape's corpse disappears and leaves behind a drop item. It's Wild Ape's fur. It's a good thing for a Low Class dungeon. But, this much is not enough to make equipment of it. Let's deposit it in《Infinite Storage》for now.

Still, the perception and hand-to-hand combat sense of the twins is terrific.

They advance without getting lost and can discover monsters quickly.

Even though no one taught them, even I who know close to nothing about Martial Arts can understand their splendid movements. They are most likely moving on instinct.

I'm genuinely happy that some influential person does not shelter these two.

The thing Syl might have been worried is this.

However, I have a certain feeling that I'm also taking advantage of them, but is that all right……

「「Kita~」」

Allen and Elena discovered another monster. A snake monster, Clay Snake has appeared.

「Oh, wait a moment!」

I stop Allen and Elena who were going to leap at the enemy.

The two obediently stop moving and fixedly stare at my face.

「That thing has a poison in its fangs, let me take care of it」

That's right, the Clay Snake has a minuscule amount of poison in its fangs. Similarly to the Poison Spider from before, it's a monster I want the bare handed children to avoid fighting with.

When the two nod in affirmation, I shoot out the《Wind Cutter》.

Of course, it was an instant kill. The dropped item is Clay Snake's skin.

As soon as I pick it up, another monster appears. Three Giant Bees, honey bees the size of an adult.

「Be careful of the stinger」

「「Wa~i」」

When I remind the children to be careful, they cheerfully reply.

Un. Although it was only one word, the two's vocabulary steadily increasing. It's a good thing.

The Giant Bee is a monster with considerably nimble movements. They take full advantage of their aerial movements to attack Allen and Elena. Allen and Elena smoothly dodge that and counterattack. However, the Giant Bees retreat to the air where the two can't reach.

Allen and Elena who have unusually hard time turn in pursuit of the Giant Bees.

Un. It's a game of tag no matter how I look.

I intend to help as soon as it becomes dangerous, but how can I destroy the spectacle of the twins having fun?

Oh! They have been chasing it individually at first, but the two now move in a pincer attack.

Elena chances while Allen sneaks around to the Giant Bee's destination. They safely brought it down the first one.

Cooperation is the twin's field of expertise. They can determine their roles just with an eye contact.

They knock down the second one immediately. N? …… I feel like they didn't make an eye contact.

These two, are they actually using telepathy to communicate? The cooperation was so splendid it forced me think that.

◊ – ♦ – ◊

「「Defeated~」」

Allen and Elena had a hard time dealing with the bees at first, but in the end, it took them less than ten minutes to deal with the three bees. They pick up the bee's drop items and trot over to me.

「You worked hard」

I receive the drop items while praising and patting the twins' heads. The dropped items are 1 Bee Stinger and 2 jars of Honey.

Oh, it's honey! A very precious item on Aetherdia which lacks sweetness.

Of course, the sugar is also being sold, but its slightly higher in price. The price for one kg is around several thousand yen. It's around ten times more expensive than in Japan?

It's enough to be called a luxury for a commoner. You would be able to stay a night at an inn with two meals at that price.

Because I have an absolutely higher income than I have had in Japan, I can buy anything if I say so myself.

However, I shouldn't do that. I'm hesitant about buying it. The quality isn't that good.

Therefore, I can't help, but keep on thinking about getting a normal honey……

Moreover, the honey inside the jars have a beautiful golden color and look incredibly delicious.

Un, if we meet more Giant Bees, let's take an aggressive stance against them!

We encountered Giant Bees immediately even without searching. Despite there being five of them this time, Allen and Elena defeated them right away.

Isn't their learning ability amazing? I thought that, but since there's nothing wrong about it, I decided to leave it alone.

The drop items are 1 Giant Bee's Wing, 2 Stingers and 2 Jars of Honey.

Doing well, so smooth!

Nevertheless…… is there a problem that the twins defeated 70% of the encountered monsters……? The monsters I defeated are only poison monsters and hard-shelled insects, and I also acted when we encountered big groups. Allen and Elena dealt with everything else.

If I had to say, the two are advancing while fighting. But, they seem to be having fun, so I let them dealt with it unless it gets dangerous.

However, if other people saw it, won't they say that I'm working the children too much? Because I'm just watching from behind while the two children fight.

Shouldn't I be more responsible as a guardian? It's not like I'm forcing them to do it, so it's okay, right?

「「Found it~」」

The two found the stairs to the next floor. Do I rely on them too much?

Chapter 16
Dungeon of Earth • Capture 4

Good morning.

Today is the third day since we entered the dungeon.

We have crisply advanced through the 12th floor yesterday and were able to find the stairs to the 13th in the evening. I have decided to stay the night before proceeding further.

Therefore, we are currently staying at the entrance to the 13th floor.

The plan was to head back to the town in three days, but I think we can capture the dungeon today or tomorrow if everything goes smoothly.

I have heard that once we defeat the boss on the 15th floor, we can use a transfer device that would take us directly to the first floor.

In the worst happens and we are not able to defeat the boss, we should be able to get back on the day before the next request.

Having decided to keep on advancing, I prepare the breakfast first.

Today's menu has been decided.

I beat eggs, sugar, and milk together to create an egg wash, soak the bread that was within the food Syl prepared for me in it. I melt butter in a pre-heated pan, put the bread in the pan and carefully cook both sides.

Un. It's the French toast.

I pour the honey we obtained yesterday over the dish. U~n, it smells nice.

Well then, itadakimasu.

Oh! Yummy!

I understand the deliciousness with just a bite. Even though there's intense sweetness, it's not too heavy. Giant Bee's honey…… delicious. Indeed, this is worth obtaining by all means.

Allen and Elena also seem to be pleased with it. They are eating in a trance.

After I had observed Allen and Elena eat for a while, I wanted to resume my meal, but a group of Giant Bees suddenly appeared from within the passage. The prey came to us on their own.

「I will take care of it, you two eat up」

I stuff my cheeks with French toast, inform the two while trying to chew it down, stand up and face the Giant Bees.

「《Air Shot》」

First, I aim at the group and shoot a sphere of air.

I was able to shoot down several of them, but more than a half were able to avoid because of their nimbleness.

「《Wind Cutter》」

I shoot several wind blades this time.

The Giant Bees got shot in succession by the wide blades.

Yosh, I was able to defeat them all this time.

After beating all the Giant Bees, I went over and collected all drop items rolling on the floor.

Most of them were wings and stingers, but I was able to obtain two more jars of honey.

While returning to continue my breakfast, another monster emerged from the passage.

Are? It's another Giant Bee. Let's clean up for the time being.

But, why do they keep on appearing?

I take a look at our breakfast and suddenly realize. Did the bees smell the sweet scent of honey and came over?

Oh! Could the Giant Bees be lured out by any chance?

It may be worth trying it out.

◊ – ♦ – ◊

After the meal, we started the 13th-floor capture right away.

While doing so, I carried an opened jar of honey in my hand.

Then——

「Tou!」 「Ho!」 「Nsho!」 「Yaa!」

As a result, the fact that the Giant Bees are attracted to the scent of honey has been established.

They took the bait! A seriously big catch.

Giant Bees assault us in sequence surprising me in the process. This completely exceeded my expectations!

Of course, the Giant Bees are knocked down by Allen and Elena who fight them joyfully without getting exhausted.

「「H~on, h~on」」

Dozens of Giant Bees have appeared, but they were all defeated.

「「E~y, e~y」」

It seems that honey has ultimately become Allen's and Elena's favorite, their mood soars with every discovered jar.

They make an incredibly nice smile each time they pick a jar up. That's too cute! Was that just now a Honey theme song? They make noises resembling singing while picking up the drop items, but that is also undisputedly cute!

「「Honey, was there~!」」

The Twins trot over to me with a smile and arms full of drop items. Because that was also too cute, I plentily patted their heads.

They should be my siblings based on age, but I'm just like a foolish parent since the beginning……

In the end, after a half a day of honey collecting, we smoothly advanced up to the end of the 14th floor where we found the stairs to the 15th floor.

Honey? Of course, we secured plenty!

Chapter 17
Dungeon of Earth • Boss

Fourth day in the dungeon.

We advanced through the 15th floor's complex design smoothly and arrived at a massive double door made from soil.

It's finally time to challenge the boss, but this is the boss room, right? It indeed has a strange atmosphere.

I will be embarrassed if this doesn't turn out to be the boss room……

While thinking so, I touch the heavy door and slowly open them——*Gigigi*, the door opens, and I face the room.

A spacious dome-like room is inside. The size is comparable to a small concert arena.

I lead Allen and Elena by their hands and step inside——*Gatan*, the door behind us shuts with a loud noise.

The behind shines when I look back at the closed door.

Looking back forward, light emits from the center of the room. And then, after several seconds when the light weakens, a beast's roar echoes around the room.

「Sha————!!」

Approximately 7-8 meters long worm appears at the place where the light emerged from. Un, it's that. A gigantic earthworm.

I see, after a fixed period of time passes, the door automatically closes and then the boss comes out.

「Allen, Elena. You two wait here」

The two nod in affirmation and I start running towards the worm.

「《Wind Cutter》」

「Sha~!」

「Oops」

I shoot magic towards the worm as a preliminary test. The worm avoids, and it throws its whole body towards me.

I twist my body and evade the worm's large body by running to a different direction.

This worm is unexpectedly fast for its size. It doesn't look like a monotone magic will work against it.

Now then, how should I defeat this fellow——while in thought……

「Sha~!」

The worm shoots《Sand Ball》at me.

「Hee~, then I will…《Air Shot》」

I shoot magic too and offset the opponent's magic.

「Next is……《Wind Arrow》」

I shoot countless wind arrows straight ahead. If monotone magic is no good, then I just have to fire a spell it won't be able to evade.

Un? That's right, it's a simple brute force approach. I don't need overcomplicated tactics.

The trajectory of《Wind Arrow》that fly straight ahead is easy to read, but it compensates with speed. Moreover, I shot dozens of them at once, as expected, the worm with its massive body size can't avoid everything even if it can move quick.

「Sha————!!!!!」

As planned, the《Wind Arrows》pierce the worm's body, it raises a suffering cry and wriggles in pain.

「This is the over!《Wind Arrow》」

I have used the chance it wriggled in pain and gathered a lot of magical power.

「!!! Sha———……」

Doshin, the worm collapsed to the ground with its whole body hollowed.

It's over.

The《Wind Arrows》pierced its body, the worm's body faintly shines, its corpse disappears, leaving behind drop items.

After surprisingly defeating the worm with ease,"Low Class dungeon's boss was just something like that" is what came to my mind first. I wonder if the power bestowed upon be 's too big, I'm very troubled.

I mean, all magic I used are general spells with about 50 proficiency.

Maa, it's better than fighting a life-threatening battle. I gather the drop items while thinking such.

The drop items are a baseball sized yellow magic stone, Worm Meat, and several worm fangs.

…… Earthworm meat. Worm Meat is a high-class ingredient? Uun… but, I don't want to eat something like that…… I will collect it for now, but do I sell or hoard it?

Ah! But, if I sell it, would it expose that we captured the dungeon? Ah, but, would the Guild staff be able to see it on my Guild Card?

【Dungeon Record】Fourth Dungeon "Earth" 15 floors captured.
【Title】Captor of a Low Class Dungeon

When I took out the Guild Card to confirm, it was well listed there. Un, this is not okay. I will get exposed when I receive a Request……

The capture itself is not the problem. The problem is that we have captured the dungeon only in a few days… First of all, let's keep quiet by not receiving any requests for a while!

That means the earthworm meat is getting stored inside the《Infinite Storage》!

When I came to a conclusion, *tosun*, I felt a light impact on my legs. Allen and Elena rushed to me and clung to my legs before I noticed.

「Good?」

「Over?」

「Thank you for waiting. It's over. You are not injured, right?」

「「Al~right」」

I was careful not to shoot magic into the children's direction, but I confirm to make sure. Un, no problems here.

Speaking of which, what about the records on the two's Guild Cards?

Thinking that, I take out Allen's and Elena's Guild Cards to check, and find that the two have the same records properly listed on their cards.

The condition seems to be to reach this floor regardless of actually damaging the boss.

——*Gogogogogo.*

A door suddenly appears on the opposite side of the room.

After putting the cards away, we passed through the door and entered a room with a crystal on a pedestal.

This seems to be the transfer device. We can get back to the 1st floor by touching the crystal.

Switching my gaze from the transfer device, I find a nicely decorated treasure chest at the back of the room. This room which opened after defeating the boss——has apparently a small chance for a treasure chest to appear.

Meaning that this is a complimentary gift?

It doesn't seem to be locked, and it doesn't look like there's a trap. I open it and see five red marble-like things inside.

Appraising it——

【Exploding Flame Sphere】

An exploding sphere that will activate after pouring magical power inside and leaving a fixed proximity of the caster.

This has… a grenade-like feeling to it? Instead of pulling a pin, you pour magical power inside, right? It's an extraordinarily dangerous smelling magic tool.

… But, it's power is worrisome. Should I try it somewhere once?

I take out the five spheres from the treasure chest and face the transfer device again after confirming that the treasure chest vanished.

All you have to do to activate the transfer device is to touch the crystal. Because the person that are holding onto the individual who touches the crystal transfer together, there is no need to leave anyone behind so I have decided to hold Allen and Elena in my arms and let them touch the crystal.

「Yosh. Then, touch that crystal」

「「Ha~i」」

As Allen and Elena touch the crystal at the same time, I start feeling a little dizzy. We moved to a familiar looking place at the same time.

Looks like we safely arrived at the hall at the 1st floor. I check the map just in case and confirm that we are indeed on the 1st floor.

The dizziness was surely due to the transfer as I'm already feeling well. Confirming that there's no problem with Allen and Elena, I put the two down and lead them outside.

N~… outside!

The wind brushing my cheeks feels very nice.

Like this, we were able to capture a dungeon for the first time safely.

Chapter 18
Three Doggies

It was just about noon when we got out of the dungeon. We ate lunch in front of the dungeon and set on grassy plains to return back to the town.

And then, I notice a snow-white dog fur? No…… wolf? 10 meters in front of us.

Isn't that wolf sitting in a proper posture while vigorously wagging its tail? Is it someone's pet or a monster, a quite worrying scene.

If I had to say…… a pet? Its actions are that of a perfectly trained pet dog…… Also, Allen and Elena are not cautious of it at all.

After thinking if we should intercept or avoid it, I appraise it just in case——

【Name】
【Race】Fenrir［Takumi's Contracted beast］
【Age】5
【Level】25
【Skills】
Water Magic | Ice Magic | Claw Slash | Evasion
Shrinking | Night Vision | Presence Detection

……

……

……

…… Un, it's a monster. Moreover, a Fenrir. It's an S-Rank monster……

Fenrir is water and ice attributed wolf with quick movements, strong claws, and fangs which likes to fight at a close range. An awfully strong monster, normally…

It can't be seen as a monster while wagging its tail like that.

But, this, what's going on……

My contracted beast, what does that mean? I don't remember making any contracts, though??

When I check my status just in case, the skills【Monster Handling】【Taming】and【Monster Contractor】suddenly appeared.

I have no knowledge about this. This must be that. It's Syl, right?

I can't leave it as it is, so when I beckon it to come over, the Fenrir's tail wagging increases and it runs over. And then, when it comes to my feet, it sits down again.

Un. Good doggy.

Nevertheless, looking at it up close, it's huge. Even after it sat down, my line of sight nearly didn't change…… Is it bigger than a cow?

The children would be completely squashed during a play. Even I'm in danger……

While observing the Fenrir in front of me, the Fenrir was also *jii*~ staring at me with its blue eyes.

「You are a Contracted beast?」

『Wafu』

It replied to me when I asked.

It seems to understand what I say. If that's the case——

「Hand」

『Wafu』

「Second」

『Wafu』

「Down」

『Wafu』

Un, flawless.

It seems to have received general training.

『Wafu!』

「N?」

The Fenrir barks, drawing my attention back to at it as if it was expecting something.

What? But, a typical pet dog would be like this, right?

「…… Yoshyosh?」

When I pat its head, it snuggles up to me comfortably. Seems like I was right. A complete pet dog!? You, are you really an S-Rank monster?

While patting it, the hem on both sides of my clothes are being pulled. Allen and Elena are pulling on the hem.

「What's the matter?」

「「……」」

When I look down to match their eyes, the two lift my hands up, turn my palms upwards and put their little hands on it.

……

……

……

… N?

「…… Hand?」

「「Wan!」」

「～～～!!」

What is this cuteness!!!

Because they were too cute, I ended up hugging the two unconsciously.

Hand!! What!? Imitating the Fenrir!?

Eh? Jealousy? Where they perhaps jealous because I paid attention to the Fenrir!?

I was troubled about treating the Fenrir as a pet, but they imitated it!! That's seriously adorable, though!? I must pay full attention to those two!

I squeeze Allen and Elena in my embrace so tightly they *kya, kya* happily, while the Fenrir rubbed its face against us and began to lick.

In the end, Allen, Elena and the Fenrir ended up mutually hugging each other.

Ah, because leaving a contracted beast alone in a place like this is impossible, I named the Fenrir Joule[1], put Allen and Elena on its back and set towards the town.

The town walls are visible. We have arrived at the town before it got dark.

There, I decided to take Joule into my shadow.

Thanks to Dark Magic, contracted beasts can enter the shadow of the user and be summoned back if necessary.

Unlike Tamed monsters, Contracted beasts are not required to always accompany you. That is the strength of Contracted beasts, is what I think.

Like this, I can walk around with S-Rank Joule without attracting unnecessary attention.

Allen and Elena were reluctant, but it would definitely get noisy if we walk with Joule around, right?

It seems it can become small as a puppy with its【Shrinking】skill, but because I have no collar, it's better like this today.

I better prepare a collar soon. While thinking so, we entered the town.

Footnotes

1. I'm not sure about the Fenrir's gender yet, but Joule is a female name according to Google

Chapter 19
The Spilled Truth

After entering the town, we went straight to the temple first. Of course, it's to talk with Syl.

(Syl, you here~?)

(Uwa————————n!! Takumi-sa———n!!)

Uwa, what happened!?

As soon as I spoke, I could hear Syl's outrageous crying voice.

(I"m glad…… gusun…… yo"u came to see meeee~)

Syl continues to cry.

Did I do something? N~? …… Nn!?

Ah! That thing!? That thing when I picked up Allen and Elena!

Which reminds me, I didn't contact him since then. I just had nothing to talk about, but does Syl think that I'm still angry!?

It's Syl, he's definitely under that impression.

(Ah~…… Syl, sorry…… I'm not mad at you so stop crying)

(Dullard… No…… I was in the wrong…… gusun)

Un. I can't tell him that I completely forgot about that matter……

(Look, don't cry. I'm at fault for not coming sooner, but I have something I'd like to ask you)

(Ye"s. What is it?)

I decided to stop worrying about the crying Syl and get down to business.

(Today, my contracted beast has appeared, but it was sent by you, right Syl?)

(Contracted beast?)

(The monster Fenrir. It's now in my shadow)

(Fenrir!? Ah———!! Water's! So cunning!! Even though I wanted to send one first!!)

Oya? Looks like it wasn't Syl. But, he seems to know the sender. They are related to a god, after all……

(Even though I told him to wait!! Mou! I will also send one immediately!!)

(Nono, wait a moment! Before that, by "Water's" you meant that the one who send it is the Water God-sama?)

(More precisely, the Water God's retainers. It definitely was the Nagas. It looks like they wanted to express their gratitude. I'm also looking after many other things for you. I will send it now)

Before the excited Syl could do something I stopped him and confirmed the sender of Joule for the second time.

Water God… It was from his retainers.

——*Piron♪*

Moreover, they sent items.

Gratitude…… No, it's definitely about Allen and Elena, but is this all right? I thought it would be『Water God』because Allen and Elena possess water skills, but…

Although he didn't give a detailed explanation, is it all right for him to get exposed by himself?

Would it be better just to ignore it from now on? I can figure it out from Water God's retainers, but Syl hasn't realized yet…

When I confirm the items that were transferred to me, the item list got absurdly long.

Even though I just skimmed through it, isn't this full of treasures!

This is more than I expected.

(Is it all right to receive that much?)

(Yes, please accept it. The Water Nagas went out in high spirits to search for the next item, so I think they will bring more to me again. I will send it to you that time!)

(Eh? Next? Why!?)

Nono! This much is already enough!? Don't I have enough to be considered a millionaire?

(I have properly received their feelings! More than this is a bit!)

(Why? Please, accept it without hesitation. It's something that was originally crammed in a warehouse anyways. I'm just sorry that I could drag out only this. Ah, even though it was crammed there's no problem with the condition!)

That is not the problem here. I am not worried about the condition!?

The items can be preserved in the《Infinite Storage》, I'm not worried about the preservation technique of gods!

In the first place, isn't the sense of values of gods wrong? They surely don't need many things… Besides, a god with a sense for money seems somewhat unpleasant……

Ah~, nevertheless, aren't the items I received offerings to a god? Is that all right? No, it's okay, right…… the god himself is giving it to me……

Un, I would feel bad investigating further.

(Syl, I'm thankful, but I won't be able to use it if I receive more)

(It's all right! It's something we completely forgot about after not touching it for several hundreds of years! It would definitely find more use with Takumi-san!)

Syl starts talking with a scarily refreshing face.

Forgot!? Aren't you too cruel!? To whom? Of course, to the people that made the offering.

You are receiving their feelings properly? Maa… in that case.

But, that has nothing to do with me accepting it or not. Eh, I won't receive a divine punishment? What is this… are you threatening me!?

In the end, I was forced to give up.

To lose a quarrel with Syl, I feel somehow disappointed in myself……

(Well then, all that's left is my Contracted beast!)

Tsk! He didn't forget.

Because it's Syl, I was expecting him to forget.

(I have Joule already, it's all right)

(Why!? If you have it, your battle force will increase, you can even use it for traveling! It's convenient!

(No, it certainly is convenient and cute, right? But, taking care of animals is hard?)

Although I still don't know what it takes, if they keep on increasing would be a bit…

(It's all right! There's no problem even if you lead the Contracted beast alone. Feeding is not necessary, all you have to do is to let it play outside occasionally! You can walk around with it when it's in its small, pet form. Ah! That being the case, you will need a collar)

S-Rank monster as a pet…… it certainly has a friendly character and doesn't look like a monster……

Collar, huh… I would like it if its flexible, but you see…

(But~……)

(Then, I will return that Fenrir to water! And then I will send a new child to Takumi-san!)

(Why did it become like that)

(That's because Takumi-san is my family, you know! You should have a wind attributed Contracted beast, not a water attributed one!

Syl's voice became tearful.

Does he dislike me having a different attributed Contract beast?

(Ah~ I understand! I understand already! I will leave it to you)

(Yes! Leave it to me! The water one is a dog, so I will send a cat? Or perhaps a bird? Ah! I will send it tomorrow so, could you go outside the town then?)

（Alright）

As Syl said, our battle force will increase, it won't become a nuisance, and it concerns Syl's dignity as the Wind God, I should just accept.

With my acknowledgment, Syl starts choosing the Contracted beast.

(What should I pick~ Would one for traveling be better?)

(Syl?)

(No, will scouting be more useful? N~――――)

(O~i)

…… He isn't listening.

Maa, I asked what I wanted to ask… Oh, well.

(Then, see you later)

Looks like my words don’t reach Syl who is happily choosing the Contracted beast. Because it couldn’t be helped, I said the greetings for my own sake and left the temple.

Chapter 20
Force Reinforcement

The next day, we left through the south gate and arrived at a prairie. Because we came without visiting the Guild, I'm in a complete whole picnic mood.

Allen and Elena are already chasing Joule around the meadows.

——*Piron♪*

I was relaxing while watching the kids play. And then, I heard the sound I already got used to recently.

Then, a shadow of an animal entered my vision.

Are? There are two?

Doesn't it say they are both my Contracted beasts when I appraise them?

【Name】
【Race】Thunderhawk [Takumi's Contracted beast] 【Age】3
【Level】20
【Skills】
Lightning Magic | Beak Peck | Flight | Surprise Attack
Farsight | Night Vision | Area Investigation

The Thunderhawk is a small hawk with gold-colored feathers.

It manipulates Lightning magic, and its quick movements itself are that of lightning, it's an A-Rank monster.

Even though I said small, it's around 30cm tall. Is it just barely able to stand on my arm?

As a test, I display my arm horizontally, before long, the Thunderhawk who was circling above me lands on my arm.

These doesn't seem to be any problem. However, its nails unexpectedly cut into my arm. I'm wearing a leather jacket, so it doesn't hurt, but would an arm cover that Hawkers use necessary in the future?

The second beast who came along is already rubbing its head against my stomach while emitting a rumbling noise from its throat.

【Name】
【Race】Celestial Tiger [Takumi's Contracted beast] 【Age】5
【Level】25
【Skills】
Wind Magic | Flight | Claw Slash | Evasion
Shrinking | Night Vision | Presence Detection

It's a tiger…… a white tiger with blue eyes. Celestial Tiger is an S-Rank monster.

A monster which can manipulate the wind and run in the sky freely. It's said that Celestial Tigers can pass even through devastating storms.

Its size is similar to Joule.

Syl was torn between a cat and a bird…… It's a bird. Thunderhawk is definitely a bird. The Celestial Tiger is…… well, it certainly is a feline, right?

However, I didn't think he would send me both.

◊ – ♦ – ◊

I named the two new additions immediately. The Celestial Tiger is Feat and the Thunderhawk is Bolt.

Then, I retrieve the items from《Infinite Storage》that I received from Syl. There was a hill when I took it all out.

Seems like Syl prepared quite a lot.

He said he would prepare a collar, but it's not just that, there's also a pendant, a bracelet, and a ring.

A mountain of materials. Detailed embroidery, leather items, and even metal armor.

From simple to cute and gorgeous clothes. Various items that could support every hobby you may want to do.

Furthermore, it's flexible to the degree that every person and even beasts would be able to use it.

The same old lavish hospitality…

「「Sparkly~」」

Before I noticed, Allen and Elena returned to me and looked at decorations in their hands.

…… Are? Wait… a moment……

These are jewels!? All these stones are jewels!? I thought they were Magic stones, but I was obviously wrong!

Sapphire, ruby, emerald, diamond!?

The items Allen and Elena were looking at were all made with gorgeous jewels. Of course, it's sparkly~ then!

No~ that seriously surprised. It was a jaw-dropping surprise.

More than a practical use, this would have an artistic value, right? It's that. The rich people attach it to their pets to brag about their superiority thing……

For Joule and others? Nonono, nai wa~ Anyway, I decided to put things that didn't look necessary right now away.

I like More simple, or rather more modest design~.

「N~… this is good」

【Collar of Nullification】
A collar with a (medium) abnormal status resistance.

What caught my eye is a smooth leather belt with a silver embroidery and a large magic stone. The effect it has is good. Let's use this. There seems to be more than one.

A blue magic stone for Joule. I then put a collar with a green magic stone on Feat, confirmed the collars' sizes, and made them both shrink.

「Un. Seems all right」

The collar properly shrank with the body. Magic tools are seriously convenient~

「「Wanwan!?」」

『Kyan!』

「「Nya~ nya~!?」」

『Na~u』

Suddenly, Allen and Elena got surprised at Joule's and Feat's small appearances and imitated them to ensure that they are Joule and Feat.

Joule and Feat properly replied to Allen and Elena's call.

I really wanted to take a photo of the scene of two children playing with two animals, but I don't have a camera, so I gave up. How regrettable…

Pulling myself together, I pick the next item.

「Ah, this may be good」

【Strong Arm Bracelet】
A bracelet with (small) physical strength increasing effect.

What caught my attention next are golden bracelets. An increase in offensive ability is good. I took the small bracelet to Joule's and Feat's forepaw, and it shrunk to fit their small sizes.

Joule and Feat should be good with this. I decided to find a magic tool for Bolt next.

【Pendant of Nullification】
A pendant with a (medium) abnormal status resistance.

【Bracelet of the Gale】
A bracelet with (small) speed increasing effect.

These two?

I put the pendant and bracelet on Bolt immediately.

Will his balance worsen if I put it only on one leg? Thinking that, I let Bolt fly in the sky once with the magic tool on.

Ah~…… Un, doesn't seem to be a problem. Bolt smoothly flies in the sky.

He comes back, lands on my shoulder and sings『Pii』while rubbing the top of its head against my cheek. Looks like he likes it.

When I finished choosing magic tools for the three beasts, I looked at Allen and Elena who were staring at me while carrying Joule and Feat in their arms.

They looked so jealous the whole time I was choosing the tools…… Joule and others have matching tools.

Is this good? Nono, this is not a choker, but a collar. You two can't wear this, okay!?

Eeh!? Don't feel so down…… I will choose something for Allen and Elena right away, so wait a moment.

「Here Allen, Elena. How about this?」

I showed the two the magic tools for our use I found after I looking for magic tools for the beasts.

【Angel's Pendant】
A pendant with a (medium) magic attack resistance effect.

【Tough Ring】
A ring with a (small) physical attack resistance effect.

【Trackign Ring】
A ring which indicates the location of the wearer on the map.

A wing pendant made out of silver on a leather strap. I put rings on both sides of the pendants and tie it around Allen and Elena's necks.

In Allen's and Elena's case, defenses were the first choice.

In addition, a tracking ring. This is a magic tool that functions as a GPS, which reflects on my map. This was the only magic tool that was standing out.

Syl must have intentionally prepared this, so I know their location even if we get separated.

「「Ehehe~」」

「You like it?」

「「Un!」」

Allen and Elena lift their pendants and joyfully stare at it.

Idle Talk 2
A Virtuous Existence

「Fuu」

After sending the selected Contracted beast to Takumi-san, I sigh and rest on the sofa.

I'm relieved that this will reduce Takumi-san's burden by a little bit.

A human that died because of me.

A soul that was excluded from the circle of reincarnation after passing away.

Although I didn't do it on purpose, even though it was a complete accident on my part, his cursing, and absurd demands, as the one responsible I was fully prepared to them.

He, however, maintained a calm attitude and inquired about his future. He really is an able youth.

For those reasons, I placed my hopes in him.

If it's him———

◊ – ♦ – ◊

『Children of Water God』

The Twins Takumi-san named Allen and Elena.

Their father is our brethren, Windell. Their mother is an Aetherdian woman of human race. It's unfortunate, but the mother died giving birth.

As expected, the mother's body couldn't hold giving the birth to god's children. Still, the children were born safely.

The children splendidly inherited the Water God's features.

They inherited the azure hair and golden eyes, but the problem is their power. Those children are hiding preposterous potential.

When they were still babies, their instincts took over, and they destroyed the container in self-defense. Thanks to that, most of their power fell asleep in the depths of their bodies.

N? You ask if it's possible for a child to be born between a god and a human?

If I have to decide between if it's possible or not…… it's is. The probability is one/several hundred billion, though. Moreover, the possibility of the child inheriting the god's power is even lower.

Therefore, Allen and Elena are really rare existences.

Thanks to their power being dormant, I'm relieved that they are not recklessly running wild.

But, they are in a condition where they can explode at any given time…… If that happens, the nearby town, country…… no, Aetherdia itself will be in danger.

They were in such a state.

However, I'm the Wind God.

The children are Water God's children. Even if the world falls in danger, I can't get involved.

Generally, Water God's children would be taken to a Shrine, and everything would be resolved.

Resolved!

Despite that…… that fellow!!!

Water God no baka!

At a time like this, he went on a honeymoon with some women to another dimension. He never returned back since then!

Where did you gooo! At least tell me where you are going!! Baka~!

He's most likely so indulged in Aetherdia's women that he didn't even notice that his children were born.

Don't get carried out by women and do your work! Good grief! Water God's retainers are so pitiful.

Water God's retainers noticed the birth of the children. However, as retainers they don't have the authority to travel together with Water God's children.

When their mother died, and they became orphans, when their miser landlord sold them to a slave trader, when they were locked in a dark basement for months and years, they were not able to do anything, but watch.

At painful times like this, I met Takumi-san.

He became my, Wind God's retainer, but he's living on Aetherdia as a person. If he meets Water God's children as a person, he won't become an interference in the domain. Therefore, I entrusted it to Takumi-sam.

It's as you know after that.

Without explaining him anything, a surprise attack that won't permit him to abandon the children. Although it can be said I used him, there was no other way.

As expected, he wasn't able to leave the children alone. He begun taking care of the children after that.

The children embraced Takumi-san immediately. Although everything went according to my plan, I couldn't help, but feel guilty.

◊ – ♦ – ◊

(……. Was my existence a godsend?)

When he said that, I couldn't refute……

(Speaking honestly, if only you told me right away instead of stealthily scheming…… is what I'm thinking)

I'm really sorry. That's right, huh…… Takumi-san would take care of the children if I properly explained the situation to him, surely……

(It's okay already. It's okay to rely on you when I encounter trouble, right?)

Of course! I will do anything that's within my power! Please rely on me more and more!

(I understand. I will be relying on you at that time. Laters)

——even thought you said that~

Uu~

Takumi-san hasn't contacted me since then. He's definitely mad at me…….

◊ – ♦ – ◊

(Syl, you here~?)

Takumi-san has finally contacted me.

I'm glad…… I'm really glad~ I have thought you wouldn't come anymore!

I have started crying tears of relief.

Hearing Takumi-san's soothing story, a Fenrir apparently appeared as his Contracted beast!

What a thing!

Even though I intended to send a Contracted beast to Takumi-san after receiving his permission! Because Takumi-san didn't contact me for a while, that talk was delayed.

Therefore, while I was patiently waiting, Water God's retainers selfishly send him a Contracted beast.

Why did this happen in the first place——

Water God's retainers regularly check the state of the children. They must have noticed Takumi-san's existence at that time. That must be it.

Then, they must have immediately investigated about Takumi-san. Thus, they should have noticed that Takumi-san is my retainer.

They then contacted me regarding the details. So, I explained. Everything that was included in my plan.

Water God's retainers were very grateful. They who couldn't do anything directly wanted to express gratitude in a way.

When they found out they could aid Takumi-san, they prepared a massive amount of items for him just like I did.

Our thinking is the same, after all…… if we are to support him openly, we should do it at least this much.

But, Takumi-san showed a disapproval to receiving the items. He said he already received enough.

But, Takumi-san, by taking care of those children, you are saving Aetherdia, you know? Besides, those items don't even reach the tip of an iceberg to us.

Therefore, you won't receive a divine punishment by accepting this much, you know?

Right, right, I will prepare the Contracted beast, okay?

Eh? You don't want it? For what reason!? It will definitely be useful to you, so accept it, please!

In the end, I received Takumi-san's approval.

I did my best!

I have to choose at once! I can't send a cowardly Contracted beast, after all.

Ah, that's right. Even the Water God's retainers should be able to grant the【Water Magic】skill.

Is that okay even though I am the Wind God? Of course, it is.

It's always better to have more attributes, right? I want to ease Takumi-san's burden even by a little bit. This much is nothing to me.

Now then, what should I give Takumi-san who I rolled up in this mess next?

Chapter 21
Showing Interest

Allen and Elena are showing off their pendants to Joule and the others.

They seem to be quite pleased with it.

I in the meantime check the contents of the《Infinite Storage》.

To be honest, I have been lost in the contents of the《Infinite Storage》myself. Furthermore, a lot of things were added into it yesterday and today.

Therefore, I decided to organize before it's too late.

Let's confirm the newly obtained things first.

I view the screen with the list of items I received from Water God's retainers.

The characters lined up in a row. I confirm them one by one.

A lot of clothes and waterproof overcoats. Ah, there's even a tent! Then there's fish, seaweed and other marine materials and products.

Uwa, there's even a water bottle that can be refilled with magical power! Super~ convenient! Moreover, it's not just one, there are several of those tools, so generous.

Food, clothes, weapons, armors, medicine, magic tools, monster materials…… I assign each and every item in its classification.

I can even equip Allen and Elena because there were item bags! They may be a little concerned about it, but because it's a small belt pouch they will surely quickly get used to it.

What do I put in? Surely some money. Should I also make them carry their own Guild Cards? Next the water bottle… what about preserved food? Dried meat? Also, some dried fruits for snacks and some candy.

Extra clothes, an overcoat, and towel. Ah, a knife too. There are small folding knives, so this should be good. Materials…… mithril? Un, why not? Since we have enough! Let's not worry about it.

In the end, I filled it with items that 5-year-old child wouldn't really need, but…… oh, well?

I'm just worried that Allen and Elena would get targeted if they use the items in public.

「Allen, Elena」

I call the two and tie the magic bags to their belts.

「This is Allen's and this Elena's. Be sure not to lose it while going outside, okay?」

「「Ye~s」」

When entering the town, the two joyfully took out their Guild Cards from their magic bags.

◊ – ♦ – ◊

「……」

「Elena, what are you looking at? …… A general store?」

While walking back to the inn through the shopping district, Elena stops and *jii*~… she stares at a certain place. When I look at what's she's looking right at, I see a female oriented general store-like shop. I see girls choosing hair ornaments over at that shop.

As expected, a girl would have an interest in things like these.

「Elena, want to take a look?」

When I ask her, Elena's face starts alternating between the shop and me. After a short while, she lightly nods.

She seems to be interested, after all.

Various clothes and colored threads are on display in the shop. Rather than a general store, a handicrafts shop?

Still, it sparkled Elena's interest as she restlessly looked around the shop.

I also looked around the shop and found a white lace ribbon among the displayed products.

「Oneesan, can this ribbon be used as hair ornament as it is?」

「Yes, it can. They are all 50G each」

I thought it might be a handicraft that needs to be sewn on first, but it seems it can be used as it is.

Of course, I don't know because I have never bought something like that before. Should I buy it?

The price…… un? Even if I ask, I don't know if it's cheap or expensive. It's the price of a single meal on Aetherdia. Is that a reasonable price?

Maa, we have more than enough to buy it so there's no problem.

「Elena, come here」

I crouch down near Elena, I bunch the hair behind her right ear together and put the ribbon in it.

Doesn't it have quite a nice feeling? The white ribbon makes Elena's azure hair flourish, I think it looks excellent.

「How nice, it suits her well. Oniisan, how about another one on the second side?」

「Yeah. I will take it」

Certainly, this hairstyle will look better on both sides.

While thinking that, I receive the exact same ribbon from the good at business lady and do the same on the left side.

「How nice, how nice. I have a mirror here Ojouchan, take a look」

The shop assistant lady takes out a hand mirror and presents it to Elena. Elena *jii~* at her hair… then her smile blossoms.

「You like it?」

When I ask, Elena gives me a light nod.

She seems to be pleased with it, let's buy more in different colors.

「Then, shall we buy some other colors? Elena, what colors do you like?」

When I look at Elena who faced the display of ribbons and chosen her favorite colors——

She chose a green and black ribbons and picked them up.

I thought she would definitely pick a pink or red, but that wasn't the case.

「You like that one?」

「Un!」

「… N～ Elena, I think that color won't go too well with your hair color, though?」

「This! Oniichan's color!」

My color? Certainly, it's close to my hair and eye color……

「She really loves Oniisan, I see～ Hey, ribbons don't have to be primarily used in hair」

「…… That's right, huh. Elena, is one of each color okay?」

「Un!」

Certainly, there's no need to use it in hair especially, let's buy it since Elena picked it herself.

Besides, she chose my hair and eye colors, she did something adorable.

「Then, this pink, cream, and light blue too? Two of each, please. Also, is that mirror perhaps for sale?」

I choose another three colors that seemed suitable for Elena.

Also, might as well buy a mirror, rigth? But, would a handicrafts shop sell those?

「This? I'm afraid to say not. This is something sold three stores from here」

Ah, as expected. But, let's buy it later since it's close.

「Rather than that, Oniisan! I have a favor to ask」

「A favor?」

「Yes! Won't you dress the children in this for me to see!?」

The slightly excited woman presents a white-hooded cape in each of her hands.

「I think it's okay, but」

「Really!?」

When I approved, the woman approached Allen and Elena to put the capes on at once.

Then, as expected, the two quickly hid behind my back.

They are able to speak in public, but they can't talk yet directly with someone except for me. Because of that, having someone dress them is…… impossible.

「Ah～……」

「Ah, indeed. These children are not used to strangers. Could you lend it to me?」

I received the capes from the depressed woman and helped the two put them on.

This time…… rather than the two putting it on themselves, they want me to put it on for them, huh～ Is it okay to be enjoying this sense of superiority? No, I can't… I have to let them become accustomed to strangers bit by bit……

Nevertheless, this cape, it feels nice on touch? Was it made with a good fabric? The cape is thick, it doesn't look like it could be worn after it gets hot.

「Can you put the hoods up!?」

「?」

After I had finished putting it on, I put the hoods up as the woman said.

「!! This is～～」

The hood surprised me. This is so cute!

There are animal ears on top of the hood!

Allen's are semicircular ears, Ellen's are triangular.

Allen and Elena titls their heads at me who is in agony, but that gesture wasn't something an ordinary person can survive. It can't be helped, but to fall into even deeper agony, right?

「So good! Amazingly nice!! Ah～ As I expected, it really suits these children!」

「You made this?」

「That's right. I'm also a tailor, after all. This is something I made a long time ago, but you see~ the moment I saw these children, I couldn't help it, but want them to put it on!!」

This person is apparently also a tailor. That explains why several clothes are on displayed.

「Are you selling this?」

Because the two are adorable in it, if she's selling it I would like tobuy it. The seasons already changed, but there's still room to grow so when it gets chilly again, they will be able to wear it.

「Of course! But, is that all right? It's made from a good fabric so the price is quite high. It's an unsold item so there's a discount, but…」

「It's all right. It suits the two well, after all」

「Really!? You saved me!!」

Thus, I immediately bought the two kemonomimi capes.

Ah, before I forget, we also visited the nearby shop to purchase the mirror.

Because I have bought lots for Elena this time, I will have to buy Allen something next, is what I thought, but…… but, what do you buy for boys?

…… Nn? What would be good?

Girls are easy to understand. It was a ribbon and a mirror this time. It will be accessory next time. A stuffed toy after that…

Then, for a boy? When I ask, the answer gets jammed.

What did I get when I was small?

———Games and manga? They don't have that in this world……

———A soccer ball or baseball glove? That's also not here…

———A plastic model? Not here…….

———Building blocks? Would it be useful even if they sell it? In the first place, would the two play with building blocks?

Nn? This is no good…… I can't think of anything good……

After thinking for a while and not figuring anything out, I have decided to put Allen's shopping on hold.

Sorry, Allen…… I will think about it, so when there's another opportunity……

Chapter 22
The Knights' Subjugation Request

『Gaya Forest』monster subjugation request.

The objective is thinning out the monsters and investigating whether monster nests were built in the vicinity of the town and sweep them if they were.

——Gaya Forest.

A very dangerous forest with a degree of risk at rank A, where monsters run rampant in significant numbers.

It is said that the central part of the forest is the territory of monsters so powerful that no one was able to return from there yet safely.

But, that does not mean that monsters are concentrated only in the center of the forest. The monsters appear even along the border of the forest.

The monsters that escape from the central part are classified as C-Rank and D-Rank. Nevertheless, they are still a great threat to ordinary people.

In addition, the strong monsters…… it's not like A-Rank monsters never come outside of the forest.

When they come out of the forest, the damage to humans inevitably increases.

Therefore, to influence the vicinity of the town…… a sweeping force is needed to clean up the near forest.

It's usually done just by knights without needing to have the help of adventurers.

This is a special case because of the place that is Gaya Forest.

Even if one enlist to knights and diligently trains, there is only a handful of people who can stride along in the Gaya Forest.

In addition, the town of Shirin is right around the border near a town in the Argo Kingdom. Although a friendly country, the town can't be left defenseless with all influential people going to the Gaya Forest.

Because of that, adventurers are called for help.

Influential people including A-Rank and B-Rank adventurer parties are being gathered.

As for me, I have received a designated request from the Knights branch Captain Grunwald Ruven-sama to participate in the joint subjugation.

◊ – ♦ – ◊

One the appointed day. I stopped by the Adventurer's Guild with Allen and Elena first. My purpose was to check the details about the request.

Honestly, I didn't hear what sort of request this time's request is. Just the usual situation.

I didn't so I wanted to grasp the contents of the requests, so I won't get in the way. The Guild is on the way to the west gate, after all.

Therefore, I scanned the request board and then went to the gathering place at the west gate.

There, Knights loading several carriages and adventurers who also accepted the request are already gathered. When the people noticed our presence, they looked at us with a suspicious and sharp gazes.

I know I stand out because I have children with me, but what an unpleasant atmosphere.

For now, I ignore the stares and approach Wald-sama who is giving instructions.

「Ou, you came!」

Wald-sama who noticed us lifts up one hand and walks towards us.

「Good morning, Wald-sama」

「You properly came. The little ones came too as expected」

「Since I have received the request I would naturally come. Besides, Wald-sama understood that the children would go with me when you have given me the request, right?」

Wald-sama knows the circumstances of Allen and Elena. If you knew, why would you want me to participate in the request!

「Hahaha. You guys will be all right. Besides, I put you guys into my team」

「You have dived us into teams?」

「Three teams in total. A line-up of fifteen people. The parties of adventurers were kept together」

「From what I can see there is no other three person party beside us?」

It's easy to see each party from the way the adventurers are gathering.

「I let you guys participate on my own, after all. Ah, that way the number of knights could be decreased」

You seem to have been at least paid considerate in the party dividing.

「If you can pay that much consideration, you should have at least explained about us to the other knight-samas. You didn't even tell them about us participating? I can feel their cold gazes since a while ago」

「Oh! I forgot!」

This person……

The knights who were listening to our conversation attentively looks at Wald-sama with indifferent expressions. I wonder if Wald-sama is always like this.

But, it should have been transmitted that the person who asked us to come was Wald-sama himself. I hope this would make conversing with the unit a bit easier, though……

Allen and Elena who are sensitive towards the surroundings took the stares of others as "hostility," but they still thankfully didn't lash out, but clung closely to my legs instead.

I decided to lift the two up because it was hard walking like that. I lifted one, I lifted the second, and now they cling to my neck instead.

This will last for a while, huh……

◊ – ♦ – ◊

We moved by the carriage to the Gaya Forest. Because the carriages can't be left behind outside the forest, knight-samas who don't participate in the subjugation will take them back.

We will arrive in four to five hours.

I was able to exchange a few words with the knight-samas in the carriage. I'm glad their attitude softened a bit.

Because I was “Forced by Wald-sama”, they had a sympathizing atmosphere around them, though. Apparently, Wald-sama regularly stirs up his surroundings.

The atmosphere in the carriage loosened and we arrived at the place of destination in peace.

◊ – ♦ – ◊

「Oshi! The preparations are complete. From here, you will move according to your party’s route towards the camping point」

This subjugation expedition is planned to last for five days. First, the three parties will move through the forest separately.

The party we are in has 10 Knight-samas including Wald-sama. Also, 4 men party『Dragon Breath』containing an A-Rank adventurer Rudolph-san. 17 people in total.

Without delay, I follow Wald-sama’s team while holding hands with Allen and Elena.

After walking in the forest for a while.

「There～」

「Coming」

It seems that Allen and Elena sensed a monster. They point to the left with their fingers while pulling the hem of my clothes.

「Thank you. Wald-sama, a monster is coming from the left side」

I immediately report to the captain of this team, Wald-sama.

「N, from left? ——… Takumi, nothing's there」

「There's still some distance. But, you should see it soon. What to do in a situation like this? Everyone takes care of it?」

The extent of Allen's and Elena's detection is vast. Therefore, we have a spare time to prepare to confront the monster.

「Gilm, can you detect it?」

『Dragon Breath』 leader, A-Rank Rudolph-san immediately checks with his party member.

Rudolph-san has a dignified, well-built stature, and he's carrying a spear with an ax-like blade attached…… a 38 years old man carrying a halberd. Indeed, a person emitting a "veteran" atmosphere.

The one he checks with is a C-Rank scout named Gilm-san. If I'm not mistaken, he possesses a detection skill. The other two are a B-Rank swordsman Zack-san and the only woman, C-Rank magician Iris-san.

「No, there's no reaction」

「Oioi, that true? Don't say such spew such nonsense to me」

「……」

It seems like Gilm-san's detection still didn't react.

The surroundings become noisy.

Hearing Gilm-san's results, Zack-san jeers back in doubt. But, Rudolph-san as if observing something looks at the children and me.

I have a【Detection】skill, but this uses me as a center to spread magical power and allows me to search for magical power other than mine. It uses quite the quantity of the user and is considerably different from presence detection.

Even though he has the same【Detection】as me, since the amount of magical power I have is overwhelmingly larger, I can search wider area.

And although similar to【Detection】, Allen and Elena have【Presence Detection】. It's an ability which allows them to sense a malicious intent in a certain scope.

Although we have to activate the skill on our own, Allen and Elena are using the skill unconsciously.

And, the effective radius of Allen's and Elena's【Presence Detection】is vast. I checked this fact myself with my【Detection】.

That's the reason, Gilm-san's detection hasn't reacted yet.

「Ah!」

「What's wrong?」

「There's a reaction. Incoming!」

It seems the monster finally appeared in his detection.

「What!?」

「Really?」

『Dragon Breath』members and knight-samas simultaneously look towards us.

Nono, it's really the truth. It's not like I would say something irresponsible in a place like this.

Hey, what are you going to do about that? You shouldn't be paying attention here?

Immediately, a single Red Wolf enters the view. When it's seen, and everyone enters a ready for battle mode——

「Ah, oi!」

One of the knights points to a direction.

Ah, crap!

When I look to what he's pointing at, I see Allen and Elena charging at the Red Wolf.

When we were in the dungeon I told them "when you find a monster it's all right to defeat it", I remembered too late.

I forgot to tell Allen and Elena to behave……

The two drew close to the Red Wolf immediately.

There, Allen quickly kicks the chin of the Red Wolf from bellow. The Red Wolf raised a bit because of that kick and this time Elena drives a drop kick on its head.

The Red Wolf crashed into the ground and stopped moving.

『……』

The knights and adventurers all have the same dumbfounded expression with their mouths agape.

Chapter 23
The Usual Scene

「「Defeated~!」」

Allen and Elena return as if nothing has happened. While drawing the defeated Red Wolf by its forepaws behind them……

They have completely mastered the dungeon's action of "picking up dropped items from defeated monsters."

However… I should stop you from dragging the Red Wolf's large body with your little bodies…… everyone got even more surprised, after all……

「Ah, un. Good job~ Are you unhurt?」

「Un」

「Ok~ay」

First, let's pat the heads of the two who safely defeated the monster. It already became a habit. If I don't do that, the children will look up at me with anxiety.

「Ah~, also. This time, Oniichan and the others will fight the monsters, why don't Allen and Elena take a day-off?」

「「? Understand~」」

I tell them before I forget. There are 15 experienced adults, Allen and Elena shouldn't need to fight.

The two tilted their heads in puzzlement, but they seemed to understand. Like this, even if they find a monster, they won't recklessly charge at it.

「Oi! The hell was that just now!」

「No～… just as you saw?」

Even if you ask me what…

「Red Wolf is a C-Rank, you know!」

「Didn't you, Wald-sama assess the children as C-Rank adventurers yourself?」

「That was you! Did you want to make your opponents careless because he was facing children!?」

Eh!? Did you interpret it like that?

「…… Even if you thought so, I have told you about how I found these kids, right?」

「That talk about them being orphaned, right? What about it?」

…… Seriously?

Did he not notice anything……

You, how could you want me to join in the request then?

「I told you I found these children malnourished in the Gaya Forest」

「I have heard that」

「!!」

Wald-sama looks like he doesn't understand yet, but the silver-haired, grayish blue-eyed, stereotypical "brains" like looking vice-captain Isaac Risner-sama realized it. He opens his eyes wide in surprise.

「…… By that, you mean "the children have originally lived in this forest"…… right? 」

「Ah!!」

With Risner-sama's words, Wald-sama finally understood.

「That's right. Were they defeating the monsters, or were they running away from them? I don't know how they lived until now yet, but they have certainly survived in the forest for several days」

『……』

Everyone is at a loss for words.

Everyone knows the dreadfulness of this forest. For that reason, they can imagine just how harsh those several days Allen and Elena lived here must have been.

「Anyhow. These children were originally strong, so even if you ask me I won't be able to answer you」

I said while patting the heads of Allen and Elena on both of my sides.

If I say it like that, there most likely won't be anyone who will ask further questions.

「Well then, here you go」

To not linger about this topic anymore, I present the defeated Red Wolf to Wald-sama.

「Ah?」

「The Knights are collecting the defeated monsters, right?」

「Yes……」

The defeated monsters are at once collected the Knights, then purchased later. A suitable price depending on the contribution will be paid separately from the request payment.

So I said, why do you still have such complicated expressions?

「…… You guys can keep that」

「Is that alright?」

「Yes. If I include that in the check, I would feel guilty for stealing from the kids…… N? Takumi, do you have a magic bag? Should I lend you one?」

「No, it's alright」

I'm told that we can harvest this Red Wolf.

Because the wolf was completely defeated by Allen and Elena only, he would feel awkward to collect it.

Even though he doesn't have to worry about it~ But, well if he says so, I will take it without any reservation.

「……《Infinite Storage>》? A space-time magic user…」

「Eh!?」

Rudolph-san points out when I collect the Red Wolf.

How did he know!?

I have made an unnatural reaction because of your sudden comment!

「The flow of magical power of magic bag and《Infinite Storage》is different. That thing on your waist is definitely a magic bag, but you have collected it elsewhere, right?」

「……」

That surprised me. To think he would be able to distinguish the difference of magical flow between magic bag and《Infinite Storage》……

「That's amazing. To be able to perceive such a small difference in magical flow」

「It's only possible for people who excel at perceiving magical power」

A proficiency of a skill, huh…… As expected of A-Rank. Indeed, not an ordinary person.

The others aside from Rudolph-san look surprised. I wasn't planning on concealing it forever, but I was unexpectedly exposed early.

But, like this, I will be able to use it without holding back, so let's not mind it?

The surveying of the forest has resumed.

And then, after a while——

「「Ah!」」

Allen and Elena suddenly run off and squat to a tree's base.

N? Is there something? Ah, a medicinal plant.

「「Here!」」

What the two brought back is a Magic Spirit Grass.

【Magic Spirit Grass】
A medicinal plant growing in places with a strong magic element in the air.
A special condition is necessary in order to cultivate demonic element. There is no success in its cultivation so far.
A useful medicinal plant mainly used for magic potions.

「You remembered well~ However you see~……」

「「Can't~?」」

This is a medicinal plant which we gathered for a request once before. The two remembered it well.

But, we are working in a group right now, so I can't have them going out on their own.

It's not good. Normally I would……

I glance over to Wald-sama. Then, Allen and Elena look at him too.

Then, once again.

「「Can't~?」」

They request with puppy eyes.

If it were me, I would get defeated instantly. How about Wald-sama……?

「…… I don't mind if you follow without falling behind」

He closed his eyes for Allen and Elena.

Since listening to the talk about Allen and Elena a while ago, the other knight-samas watch over the children with lukewarm expressions.

Allen and Elena sense that too, they are able to give simple answers.

We have become quite well-known, but that may have been good.

Un, all turned out good…… I think?

「Don't go too far」

「「Ye~s」」

Allen and Elena who received permission start running here and there energetically. They collect medicinal plants and fruits one by one.

But, you see, I didn't teach them about the medicinal plants in the vicinity? …… Eh, did they see them before?

… Yes, when I met them in the Gaya Forest for the first time. I was indeed gathering various things that time. But, I was collecting it alone, did they remember just from seeing me?

They remember well~

My body was inserted with knowledge and appraisal, so I had it easy, but these children really are talented~

「Oniicha~n」

「Get that~」

Allen and Elena seem to find something again and trot over to me. Then, they point their fingers at a big rock, trying to show me something.

When I look towards the direction they are pointing at, I see a moss growing in the shade of rocks.

I see. This can't be gathered without gloves. These children even remember the proper gathering method.

＝＝＝＝＝

【Iwami Moss】

A turquoise species of moss growing in humid, dark places. Especially in shade of rocks.

Causes rash in contact with bare hands.

Medicine for an itch when mixed with several kinds of medicinal plants.

＝＝＝＝＝

「What's that?」

「That's an Iwami Moss, isn't it? They are really smart children」

All members stop and look at the shade of the rock.

Most of the people tilt their heads in puzzlement, but Risner-sama seems to know of it. My brains-like impression of him wasn't wrong.

「This is a material mainly used for skin itch medicine. Captain, you were previously lamenting when an anti-itch medicine wasn't being sold, weren't you? It's used for that. The reason that medicine isn't sold that much anymore is because the Iwami Moss's acquisition has recently decreased」

"Mainly used for skin itch medicine" Risner-sama makes it sound good, but…… in other words, it's that. Medicine for athlete's foot.

Wald-sama… you have an athlete's foot, don't you……

Are? Why are so many people staring at the moss? You guys too!?

「Seriously!? Oshi! Let's gather it all!」

「Captain, you can't!」

「Wald-sama, you can't!」

Wald-sama who really wants an itch medicine quickly moved towards the moss. Both Risner-sama and I stop him in panic.

「Captain, if you touch it bare handed you will get rash. Please, think a bit about why those children didn't gather it themselves but called Takumi-san instead! Even though I told you to『Stop working by instinct』so many times! Besides———」

Risner-sama started his lecturing. The other knight-samas look like this is a normal occurrence. Being a vice-captain to a captain who moves on instincts seems tough.

While the lecturing is going on, I put on leather gloves, shave off the moss clinging to the rock with a knife and collect it.

However, even when I was done with the collecting, the lecturing time didn't come to an end yet.

Is it still going to continue?

Let's confirm with the other knights.

「When will this finish?」

「It won't end for an another hour」

…… Another hour? No～ I can't wait that long……

Can't be helped……

「Let's release the ultimate weapon…」

「The ultimate weapon… is it?」

「Right. Allen, Elena. Come here———」

I whisper to their ears and send them out towards Risner-sama.

「N?」

The two approach Risner-sama and pull on the hem of his clothes. Risner-sama noticed it and stopped his lecturing.

「What's the matter?」

「Here」

「For you」

Allen and Elena hand Risner-sama the gathered Iwami Moss.

「You are giving me this?」

Risner-sama who crouched down checks the contents of the bag and confirms with Allen and Elena.

「Un」

「For you~」

「Thank you very much」

「「Un!」」

They were able to end the lecturing time safely.

Allen, Elena. You did well!

Chapter 24
Phantom Bread

「Allen, Elena. Come! It's time for a break」

「「Ye~s」」

I call over the two children who are running all over the place, picking fruits and medicinal plants, and use《Washing》on them.

「What would you like for a snack?」

Because I got the permission from Wald-sama, the two have snack break while walking.

Allen and Elena who move the same as the adults, eat half of what the adults eat. It can't be helped because they have small stomachs. However, that would prevent them from receiving enough nutrition, so I often give them snacks on the move.

「「Cream!」」

The request of the two seems to be a Cream bread.

「Here. Eat while paying attention so you don't trip」

「「Ye~s」」

The two bit into the bread immediately after I hand it over to them. Wald-sama who saw that suddenly shouts.

「Oi! Is that『Gold Wheat's Shop』phantom bread!?」

「What's with that……」

Phantom bread? Cream bread?

「Sold on days without a fixed date, moreover, there's a limit of 20 breads a day, therefore it's called "Phantom bread"!」

Oh, seems like Road-san started selling Cream bread.

◊ – ♦ – ◊

It was few days after arriving at the town of Shirin.

「Excuse me」

「Ye~s」

When the sun was setting, I visited a bakery called『Gold Wheat's Shop』.

The goods weren't displayed anymore, it was the closing time.

When I entered the shop and called the salesclerk, a woman immediately came from inside the shop.

「I'm sorry, it's time for the shop to close today」

The woman was apologetic.

「Is it possible to order bread here?」

First of all, I asked what I came to ask.

「Do you mean you need a certain quantity prepared?」

「No, there's bread I want you to make」

The bread eaten in Aetherdia are simple. The sizes are different by the shop, but all of them are just a circular bread.

Table roll——a small-sized bread used as a garnish for meals.

If a Pullman loaf is not being sold here, things like Kashi-pan[1] or Chouri-pan[2] won't sell anywhere.

But, there are more or less varieties of bread.

Containing an albumen mixed with wheat flour——a bread made with a whole wheat flour, Cereal bread.

Bread made from a refined white wheat flour, White bread.

A rye flour——a bread made from rye, Brown bread.

Although the white bread is delicious and fluffy, it's wasteful not to develop it further.

I thought. If it's not here, why not just create it?

So I came to『Gold Wheat's Shop』.

「You want to make? Is it something different from what's being sold?」

「Yes, that's right」

「Umm…… the bread is made by the father so… I will get him」

「Alright」

The woman is apparently a daughter of the shopkeeper.

She went back to the kitchen and called over the shopkeeper.

「Is it you? The one wanting to make bread」

Immediately, a solidly built man, with a typical『Oyaji-san』appearances came out.

「What do you want to make?」

「Umm, it's this, but…」

I take out a custard cream and Ranka fruit jam I made myself.

「N…… a jam? I don't know this one…」

「This is called custard cream. I want to put this inside bread and bake it」

「Put inside, you say?」

「Is that not possible?」

「It's not like it's not possible, but. I have never made something like that before…」

「In that case———」

I visited『Gold Wheat's Shop』the next day in the afternoon again and demonstrated the shopkeeper, Road-san how to make it.

I received a pre-made white bread dough from Road-san and I immediately worked on the filling.

First, I taught Road-san how to wrap the jam and custard cream in the dough properly. As expected of a baker, he quickly got hold of it.

The custard cream and jam I prepared has been all used up in no time. On the other hand, there was quite a lot of the dough remaining.

He wanted to bake the remaining dough normally, but I asked if I can take it over as I was thinking about using it for a different bread.

Road-san who showed interest in the Cream bread and Jam buns readily approved.

Having said that, something suddenly came on my mind……

I retrieved Raisins from《Infinite Storage》I washed them in hot water and lightly sprinkled with rum. Maa, I intended to make a basic Raisin bread. I only knead it into the dough.

After all, there is also no store which sells those.

What can I make next…… ah, that's right! There was that!

What I retrieved next is a cinnamon stick. I found and bought this while walking around a grocery store.

That and sugar. Sugar is not from a grocery store, but it was something I received from Syl. I mix it with cinnamon to create a cinammon sugar.

I spread the dough into a 30cm rectangle and paint the surface with melted butter, sprinkle it over with the cinnamon sugar and coil it around in a cylinder shape.

I cut it into 3~4cm long sections and bake it. All that's left is to sprinkle it over with a dissolved sugar once it's baked?

I surprisingly quite love them~ Cinnamon rolls.

Now, Road-san only needs to bake them properly.

◊ – ♦ – ◊

After all the bread was baked, it was time for sampling.

「So good!」

I receive praises from Road-san.

「「Yummy~」」

Allen and Elena who observed me the whole time finally bit into the samples which they really liked. Although they were only samples, but because there were four kinds of bread, they filled their mouths plentily.

A~ah, if they eat so much, they won't be able to eat dinner later~

And then, the bread I made (strictly speaking, they weren't my ideas) became the talk of『Gold Wheat's Shop』.

Of course, I have approved of it. If it sells, I will be now able to buy it from a shop. Because the custard cream tends to spoil, I had to explain its method of making, though carefully.

After that, Road-san did various trials and errors and put the products on sale.

◊ – ♦ – ◊

The rumors of 『Gold Wheat's Shop』 Jam bun, Raisin bread, Cinnamon roll being first-class bread from the town of Shirin spread around.

The rival bakeries now started selling them too.

Maa, but no matter what happens, their rivals won't be able to reproduce it properly. But still, there are one or two shops that are ahead of『Gold Wheat's Shop』.

But, the Cream bread made with custard cream is a specialty of『Gold Wheat's Shop』. They won't allow its ingredients to be known to anyone.

The culture of "Bread, the main protagonist" was born……

… I honestly didn't know. When did it become like that……

I didn't think that the Cream bread would become so famous it would be called "Phantom bread"……

「Moreover, there's a talk it sells out a few minutes after selling. Takumi, you bought it!」

「No, this is something that was personally made for me」

「Haa!? What's that! They shouldn't be accepting orders for that!」

I did order anything from Road-san.

Rather, why is Wald-sama so knowledgeable about this? Did he perhaps not eaten it yet?

The Knights including Wald-sama are looking envious…… The adventurers of『Dragon Breath』who are not from Shirin didn't seem to know of it, but they are now greatly interested…

「Kiddos, share a bit with me」

「「No~!!」」

Please don't go taking food from children!!

Ah~ my Cream bread inventory…… ah, there's enough for all people here.

Can't be helped~

「Only this one time~」

「Seriously!? Alright!」

When I take out the Cream bread, everyone gathers.

Calm down a bit! This is『Gaya Forest』be a little careful of surroundings!

◊ – ♦ – ◊

「Iya~ that was good!」

Everyone who ate the Cream bread liked it. There seems to be an unexpectedly large amount of people who like sweets.

However, in this world, the most common sweet thing is jam.

There also seems to be cookies, but they are something that only those with a bit more money can afford.

Honey and starch syrup appear to be relatively cheap, but it can only be eaten like that or mixed in a tea.

No wonder I couldn't find sweets for Allen and Elena in the town.

I have no choice, but to make the sweets myself from now on.

Chapter 25
Abnormality

『Buhiiiiiii~』

After the unexpected break, a group consisting of six Orcs and one High Orc has appeared after we resumed the survey.

Knights in pairs take on the Orcs, while the『Dragon Breath』party engages the High Orc.

And I'm also responsible for taking care of one Orc.

Although Allen and Elena are here, I confront the Orc alone.

Seeing that, Rudolph-san and Gilm-san offered help, but I of course declined.

There's only one opponent, after all. There are no problems.

「《Wind Cutter》」

I quickly cut its head off, case closed!

Orc has a large body with great power, but its movements are slow so it's easy to defeat. All you have to do is aim and shoot. A big body means big target.

Easy peasy!

「Haa~!」

As for the Knights, one person attracts the Orc's attention and the other person strikes at it.

They keep repeating it wounding it little by little and then give it a fatal wound. It's a very steady way of fighting.

I just quietly watch, ready for a follow-up anytime.

However…… They way of fighting is completely opposite of me who can only fight with brute strength.

It's a way of fighting that I, who lived 20 years without a single fight can't do.

In the first place, I didn't do any other exercises back on Earth than running (I wasn't fast by any means). I was not athletic at all.

Un, I was a klutz. What a sad thing……

In ball games, I was catching the balls with my face~ It's all old memories now.

However, I can now run fast because of the present body, my physical ability can't be compared to my previous one!

Iya~ moving freely is splendid! I could avoid any ball now!

However, even if my physical ability increased, my martial experience is zero, so I may not be able to provide much support……

I know I can't help because I never had any interest in things like these, leaving me with limited knowledge.

Allen' and Elena's fighting style is strong, should I learn a bit from them? Dojo… is there a place like that somewhere~

There should be a place that teaches basics. Let's look for one next time.

「Oriyaa~!」

「Buhiiii~」

Ah, looks like Wald-sama and others defeat all of the Orcs. There don't seem to be any injuries.

「Haaa!」

「Buhiiiiiii~!」

Oh, Rudolph-san's halberd beheaded the High Orc.

With the High Orc's cry of agony, Rudolph-san shouts not losing to the Orc.

「Uwa!」

When all Orcs are defeated, Wald-sama looks at me with a stern expression. Then he suddenly asks while grabbing my head.

「Takumi!!」

「Yes!?」

「To instakill an Orc… just who are you!」

Even if you asks me that.

I understand that an experienced Knight will have troubles against Orc in a one on one fight, but I think that anyone with some skill in magic can behead such slow monster easily?

Moreover, the others also didn't take that much time to deal with their opponents.

Why are you grabbing my head?

「「Uu~」」

「Allen, Elena. It's all right. Wald-sama how about releasing your hand? The two are wary of you」

I'm being bullied? The two probably thought so and let out cute growling noises.

Hearing my words, Wald-sama notices Allen and Elena clinging to my sides while glaring at him. He awkwardly releases his hand.

「Allen, Elena. Look, I'm okay, calm down please~」

For now, I pat the two *U~ u~* growling kids' heads.

「To have that done to him and be alright!」

「Perhaps captain wasn't serious enough?」

「No, that was serious. I can tell. That was a considerable amount of power」

「… Inhuman」

「Right. He's not normal」

Because I was held with all his strength, I felt pain. However, I have a physical attack resistance. Moreover, it's MAX'ed!

Therefore, although I felt only a little pain, an average person would be finished. The Knight start whispering among themselves after witnessing me not showing any reaction to Wald-sama's attack.

Hey, you guys…… I can hear you.

They are certainly not wrong. I'm a God's retainer "Human?". You are not wrong, but…… that's somewhat rude.

「Wald-sama and others also didn't take much time to deal with their opponents」

「We were in pairs! Moreover, we can't do something like instakilling it! You are an F-Rank fraud!」

「No, I have raised by one rank, so I'm an E-Rank now」

Adventurers normally start at F-Rank, right? Then, they steadily improve they rank.

I'm not a fraud!

「Doesn't change the fact it's stra~nge!」

So cruel……

「Rudolph-dono! I will contact Guild Master too, but once we return, please tell Guild Master to raise this fellow's rank immediately!」

「Right. I will definitely talk with him」

「……」

Oya?

「With a high ranker's recommendation, the Guild Master can raise one rank to some extent」

Rudolph-san who saw my bewilderment explains.

Something like skipping grades? I see, so there was such a system.

As expected, I didn't know such information.

Probably, even though Syl knows basic information, he isn't aware of small details like this. It's not necessary for him, after all.

It wouldn't be bad to raise my rank, right? The extent of requests I could take will increase.

What procedures should be taken after returning to the town?

Maa~ Rudolph-san said he would talk to the guild's top so I should probably just wait since they will be contacting me?

◊ – ♦ – ◊

「First of all, let's clean up. Fuse, Cain. Rudolph-dono and others dismantle the High Orc. Collect as much meat as you need. Others take the Orcs」

People start dismantling on Wald-sama's orders.

I also collect the Orc's materials.

First, the magic stone.

Next, the testicles…… it's apparently an ingredient used for male-oriented stimulants. I will absolutely never drink it, but…… this seems to be quite high in demand.

High Orc's materials are same as Orc's, magic stone and testicles. Also, it's skin is used for protective gear.

Also, both have an enormous amount of meat.

This is a problem. Several of 3~4 meters tall Orcs leave behind quite a lot of meat.

It's food. It would be normally brought back, but today is the first day of the expedition. If we secure it now, it will spoil before we could get back to the town.

Unfortunately, in a case like this, we can only secure enough for us to consume.

「Yosh, we are done. Then———」

And, the rest is burned, so they don't turn undead.

———Normally, they would be burned, but……

「Wald-sama」

「Takumi, what's up?」

「Have you forgotten? With me, we can collect everything」

In my《Infinite Storage》the meat won't spoil.

『Ah!』

He seemed to forget because he's not familiar with it yet, but the time stops in space-time magic. It should be known that time stops inside the《Infinite Storage》.

Thus, we have decided to collect the rest of the Orc meat.

Because it would take a time to dismantle, I just stored everything inside《Infinite Storage》 just like that.

「Nevertheless…… to think there would be a group so close to the town」

「This is unusual」

「What do you think, Rudolph-dono?」

It seems to be rare to encounter a group half a day distance of the town.

They are mostly seen alone.

Wald-sama and Risner-sama confirm the situation with Rudolph-san.

「Umu. I have a feeling that the atmosphere in the forest has been quieter than before……」

Rudolph-san's meaning isn't "it's calm", but "it's quiet before the storm".

「Captain, it might be better to investigate this carefully」

「Yea, I agree. Let's move with more care from now on」

We advance further to the forest while cautious.

Chapter 26
Cooking Instructions

When the sun begins to go down, we arrived at the camping point.

I wanted to prepare a meal, but it seems the Knights are in charge of meals.

The ones in charge are the knights Cain-san and Heinz-san.

It appears that the menu is High Orc meat skewer, soup, and hard bread.

Cain-san pours water into a large pot puts a small amount of dehydrated vegetables inside. Soup?

Heinz-san is preparing the skewers. He's cutting the Hight Orc meat into chunks and stabbing it on skewers…… Fist-sized chunks of meat?

…… N?

「Please, wait a moment!」

「Takumi-san, what's the matter?」

I hesitated to interfere, but…… I can't overlook this!

I absolutely feel wrong about this……

「I just want to confirm, but…… are you going to put something else in this soup? after boiling it?」

「No, I will just season it with salt afterward!」

「……」

Seriously……

「Are you going to cook meat of that size?」

「Yes!」

「……」

……

Oh my…… is this normal? It feels like nothing is strange with this……

Nono! Indeed, the meals in『Komadori Pavilion』had a salt-based taste. However, they were appropriately delicious.

This is not normal!

「First, the soup. Aren't you missing ingredients for the stock? It will only have a salty taste like this… Then, make the meat into a bit smaller pieces, if too little they will easily burn, if too big, they will be underdone」

The people here were saying that the cream bread was delicious. Which means that their palate isn't misaligned.

So for what reason are they overlooking this?

When I ask Wald-sama and the other knights———

「We are mostly people who can't cook, you see」

「Everytime during the camp it's "as long as we eat" feeling. Dried meat and hard bread are better than soup stock alone」

「It's because, in this unit, Cain and Heinz make the best meals」

Most of the knights are noblemen. It should be quite reasonable that they can't cook.

However, since they are nobles they should have refined palates…… they don't seem to mind.

They probably make a firm line during camping.

After that, I ask the Dragon Breath party———

「We also always eat dried meat and hard bread」

「Iris? No way, impossible. This fellow can't cook~*mon*」

「Rather, this fellow makes hazardous waste」

「…… I can live even without being able to cook!」

I got a similar answer.

Apparently, there is no decent cook.

No, but I'm sorry. I don't want to eat the meal Cain-san and Heinz-san are going to make.

Besides, I have to pay attention to Allen's and Elena's meals. Their malnourished bodies finally started approaching the standard.

Dried meat and hard bread are disagreeable, but I will definitely won't let them eat a nearly salt water soup and underdone meat!

「Cain-san! Please, finely cut 3~4 pieces of meat and put them into the pot! Heinz-san, please cut all the chunks of meat into 1/4 sizes! I will return right away, so please do it in the meantime!」

I give instructions to Cain-san and Heinz-san without caring for my standing, leave the camping point and enter the forest to gather the necessary things.

Of course, Allen and Elena follow after me.

First, securing the ingredients!

It would be alright to use ingredients from the《Infinite Storage》, but I thought it would be better not to use it in front of the other teams.

Besides, the forest is a treasure house of ingredients. I can gather enough ingredients in a matter of several minutes without having to use the ingredients from《Infinite Storage》.

「I'm back!」

After returning with edible plants and mushrooms in both of my hands, I immediately start cooking.

「This is?」

「Ena grass and Blue seed. Both are edible plants. And this is Rook mushroom and Petal mushroom. These are edible mushrooms」

「I have seen those at the market」

「That's right. All of them are common, after all」

I give names and explain about to plants I picked to Cain-san and other interested people.

All these plants and mushroom are commonly sold at the market. I thought they might accept the things they are familiar with easier. I choose the things to pick like that.

I have found some rare mushroom that doesn't appear at the market that much, but I have stopped myself from serving them something they are not familiar with while telling them『It's all right』to eat.

Ah, of course, I picked it and stored it inside the《Infinite Storage》.

「These grow almost anywhere, so it will be useful to remember them」

After adding the chopped meat, I washed and cut the plants, vegetables, and mushrooms and added them to the pot.

While the water in the pot is getting hot on the fire, I stick mouthful-sized meat onto skewers, lightly sprinkle them with salt, and put them near the fire.

Of course, I have used Cain-san and Heinz-san.

The two are helping without complaining. From a certain standpoint, it may seem like I'm selfishly butting in. Somehow, I'm sorry……

I season the soup lastly after the veggies and mushrooms cook. Because the dried meat comes with salt, using just a little bit of salt is okay.

The mushrooms and dried meat in the soup leave a nice feeling to it.

I grill the meat carefully without exposing it to intense heat.

Yosh, it's finished!

「!!!!」

Everyone takes a mouthful of the completed dish and their movements stop.

Was it not palatable? I thought for a moment, but the next moment, everyone started vigorously stuffing their mouths.

「Oh!」

「Delicious!」

「Ngu!」

Seems like I was worried for nothing.

They continue quietly eating after that, and all of the soup and grilled meat disappeared.

「Iya~ I'm stuffed! That was delicious~!」

「I'm glad it suited your tastes」

Because it was a simple food that didn't take much effort to make, I didn't think they would be so pleased with it. If they are pleased like this, it was worthwhile cooking it.

「Iya~ Takumi is talented. I can't think that he just came of age」

「…… Haa?」

Wald-sama suddenly says something strange.

What did he just say? Did he just say『came of age』?

It means becoming an adult in Japanese. However, on Aetherdia, one becomes an adult at 15 years of age, you know?

Is this that…… I look five years younger?

「…… I don't know how old you think I am, but I'm 20, you know?」

『Eh!?』

Ue!? Everyone!? Everyone here is surprised?

「Seriously!? I thought you would be 16-17 at most」

「……」

Was I only seen as someone who just came of age? So it's true that faces of Japanese people look young…… I have realized it for the first time.

A silly talk continued after that.

I had to tsukkomi a few times as the talk flowed, but it went well.

When it became dark, the night watch has been selected.

There will be three shifts, but I was told I don't need to be on duty today, so I gratefully decided to sleep.

「Here, Allen, Elena」

I put the blanket over Allen and Elena, and they cuddle to my sides as always.

「Do you always sleep like that?」

「Just when sleeping outside. They don't seem to like sleeping on the cold ground」

「Fuun~」

I have tried spreading the blanket on the ground once before, but the two opposed by shaking their heads.

It seems like they recall the time before meeting me….. their environment when they were slaves. They don't appear to remember much, but they remember this.

In addition, the two seem to have taken a liking to sleeping like this after the first time.

「Then, I will gratefully accept your offer and sleep」

「Ou. Have a good sleep」

Suu~ Suu~ the two have already fallen asleep. After gently patting their heads, I closed my eyelids.

◊ – ♦ – ◊

The next day when I woke up, everyone was staring at me with expectations to make breakfast.

Of course, I made it……

I mean, I might as well make something delicious.

Chapter 27
Rescue

「Captain! That!」

The second day of the expedition advanced smoothly. We are a little ahead of schedule today as all three teams are going to gather at one camping point.

At that time, an accident has happened.

One of the knights all of sudden loudly shouts and points towards a direction.

N? A red light is visible.

「It's a flare! We are rushing to join up!」

Wald-sama says quickly changes the direction. Others follow him.

Only I follow without knowing what's going on.

By flare they mean the red light, right? Does it have any meaning?

「What is that?」

「It's light from an emergency magic tool. We use it when encountering an unmanageable monster, when in need of assistance. One of the teams must be in trouble」

There seem to be various colors with different meanings, the red means that help is requested, and on the other hand, blue is used when there's no need for help.

There also seem to be smoke flare types, but light flare types are used in places like Gaya Forest where the view is obstructed.

Risner-sama quickly explained while speedily advancing towards the flare.

The reason we do not run at full speed is that it's highly possible that we will have to fight before getting to the destination. We wouldn't be of any help if we got exhausted before joining up.

Everyone moves at a quick pace while suppressing the feelings of impatience.

「It would be better to hurry up?」

「Yes, that's right」

「Then, I will go ahead. Allen and Elena———」

「「Going～」」

It's an emergency with human lives on the line. I shouldn't be stingy.

Because I can use Wind Magic to accelerate, I will use that and go ahead.

Therefore, I have thought to let Allen and Elena stay with Wald-sama and others———but they spoke faster than me.

It seems impossible to persuade them now, so I decided to take them along. We shouldn't be wasting any more time.

「Wind, gather around me and form a gale. 《Accel》」

I chant with Allen and Elena in my arms. It looked like Wald-sama was saying something, but I ignored it, enveloped my body in wind's power, and started running.

Several minutes later, we arrived at the place of destination.

「Is that it!」

People opposing monsters with their swords appeared in my sight.

I jumped up with the momentum and landed on a branch where I overlooked the situation from.

The monster is Red Wolf's higher variety, B-Rank Bloody Wolf. Moreover, it's a whole pack.

Bloody Wolf is a wolf with a fur red as blood. Confirming visually…… there are 7 in total?

The path of retreat has been cut off. Furthermore, there several people on their knees.

Wounded? They don't seem to be severely wounded, but it will get dangerous if it continues.

「Allen, Elena. I will reduce the numbers first by bit, will you help me with clean up?」

「「Un!」」

「Thank you」

「「Ye~s」」

The situation is worse than I thought. It feels like they are "Barely holding their ground" and won't be able to hold any longer.

I wanted to help alone, but it doesn't look I will be able to rescue them all on my own, so I asked Allen and Elena for assistance.

「《Air Shot》」

First, I aim at the Bloody Wolves from the top of the branch and shoot seven air bullets.

———*Doon.*

「Gyaun!」

「Wha! What!?」

The air bullets hit. A cloud of dust rises together with the cries of Bloody Wolves and surprised voices.

I immediately blow off the cloud of dust with wind to clear the visibility.

Apparently, the《Air Shot》hit only four targets. Moreover, the air bullets only damaged them, I wasn't able to kill them off.

I held back on my magical power so I wouldn't involve the people nearby, but it seems that the magical power wasn't enough to kill the wolves.

I retrieve a『Water Katana』from the《Infinite Storage》. This is something I received from Water God's retainers.

I pull the blade from its blue scabbard while jumping off the branch and kill one of the injured Bloody Wolves. The Blood Wolf cries it's last「Gyaun!」and falls down.

I immediately pull the sword from the dead Bloody Wolf and instantly behead another one. With this, two Bloody Wolves have died.

———*Dokon!*

Following me, Allen and Elena jump down and land on two Bloody Wolves, killing them right away.

The squashed Bloody Wolves sunk into the ground, but that's a trifling matter, right?

Now then, this leaves three more Bloody Wolves.

Allen and Elena face a nearby Bloody Wolf together.

「Be careful, okay?」

「「Ye~s!」」

An energetic reply.

I think it will be all right, but no matter what I'm worried about the two children.

「Y, you guys certainly are… the people Wald brought along……」

「Yes. We have come to back you up」

One of the knights approaches and asks me while supporting his body with a sword. This is the team's captain if I'm not mistaken.

I look at the people that were attacked.

Everyone has some kind of a wound, but including the people that are on their knees without being able to move, there doesn't seem to be anyone with life threating injury.

「First of all, we will tidy this up. Please, gather the people that can't move in one place in the meantime」

「O, oi!」

After saying that, I turn around and confront the two growling Bloody Wolves.

I think I have heard a disapproving voice, but I disregard it, and set up with the Water Katana in my right hand, and magic ready to be shot in my left hand.

「《Air Shot》」

First, I face one of the wolves and shoot an《Air Shot》at it to keep it in check and assault the other.

I evade the Bloody Wolf that attacks me from the back. The Bloody Wolf I kept in check with《Air Shot》imemdiately cut the distance between us.

I twist my body to evade the other charging Bloody Wolf and swing my katana at it, but it was able to dodge.

Strong! As expected of B-Rank monster.

Bringing the four down with a surprise attack might have been a big win.

While glaring at the two Bloody Wolves, I take a glance at Allen and Elena. They are skillfully poking the wolf down.

It somehow looks like they are playing. No, judging from their happy expressions, they really are playing.

But well~ They seem to be okay at the moment.

When I return my sight at the two Bloody Wolves, they rush at me as if they were waiting for this timing.

Now then, what should I do?

I could easily defeat them with some extra magical power, but I would damage both the wolves and surroundings too much. That is no good, right?

The fur of Bloody Wolf is selling for a high price. They appear to be used to make coats for noble ladies.

If I'm thinking like that, could it be that I got used to an adventurer lifestyle?

N~ I don't want to damage the fur, after all~ It's a pity, but I don't want to waste much time.

「《Air Shot》」

First, I shot several air bullets at the same time.

———*Don!*

They hit the ground here and there, causing a cloud of dust whirl up. This time, I charge right inside the bad visibility cloud.

「Ha!」

I swing down the katana at the sign of presence.

「Gyaun!」

A sense of feedback.

I make sure once the cloud of dust clears up. I see a wolf head at my feet.

Un. I was able to defeat it. Moreover, not the body, but it's neck. I did better than I expected.

The other Bloody Wolf groans at the loss of its companion.

A one on one charge?

I was about to strike that fellow down with my sword.

But, at that time———

「Gyaun!」

Something came crashing into the side of the Bloody Wolf.

「…… Are?」

The thing that crashed into the Bloody Wolf is! Another Bloody Wolf.

When I look at the direction the Bloody Wolf flew from, Allen and Elena were there.

Their flying kicks sent it to the crash course.

The flying Bloody Wolf is already dead, but the one it crashed into is still alive, so I finished it first by slashing its neck.

「Oi! You alright!?」

Wald-sama and others arrived right at this moment.

Idle Talk 3
Outrageous Siblings

I'm Isaac Risner.

I'm the vice captain of Shirin's branch's second Knight unit.

The captain I work under is Grunwald Ruven, an honest man who can't stay idle for a minute. He's a musclebrain who charges at everything without thinking.

I should be an assistant of the captain, but it always ends up with me doing all the paperwork.

「Captain!」

「What? Why are you so flustered」

While working in the office, I see a figure of a person walking to the town gates from Gaya Forest, so I report while flustered.

No person passed this gate leading to the Gaya Forest in last several days.

All gates except this west gate are usually used to get out of the town. If you miss the highway and come to this gate, you would be coming from northwest or southwest.

However, the figure I see is coming from the west. It's coming straight from the Gaya Forest.

There are occasionally some reckless people who go to the Gaya Forest, but they would be someone coming from the town, we would be able to confirm their identities.

「Isaac, I will go take a look」

「I understand. Please, return properly. If not, you won't be sleeping tonight」

「…… I know」

He was already restless, he wanted to escape from the work.

I approve, allowing him to take a breather from work.

Captain decided to go to the west gate and wait for the person in question.

After a while, Captain returned back to the office.

「Captain, what happened?」

「He apparently went out to gather some medicinal plants. Moreover, he even took two children with him」

「… Children, is it?」

「Yes. Two little ones were with him」

「……」

Just a naive youth. Is what I'd like to think, but that youth apparently successfully returned from Gaya Forest with medicinal plants.

If it's like that, he must have a considerable ability.

Unfortunately, he just arrived here from a village and didn't belong to any organizations or guilds so we couldn't identify him.

Well, it turns out like that when you don't have identification papers.

Because I didn't have that much interest at that time, I ended up forgetting about that youth.

However, Captain apparently had another encounter with that youth and the children.

And because he had an interest in that youth, he requested him to join the subjugation expedition in Gaya Forest.

I found out later that day.

Really, Captain is always so selfish…… letting children participate in a request with the overbearing adventurers, how foolish!

Thinking about the place we are going, I begin to worry.

Nevertheless, because an official request can't be turned down, they ended up participating.

◊ – ♦ – ◊

「Ah, oi!」

It was after entering the forest for a while.

Cain, one of my subordinates points his finger and shouts in panic.

When I look towards the direction… aren't those children charging at a Red Wolf?

Hey, wait a second, please! Why are you running that way!?

Haa!? The boy kicked the Red Wolf from below, a splendid kick.

Eeeeh!? Why is the Red Wolf's body lifting up!? It's a kick of a child, you know?

Even though the monster is on the smaller size, it's still twice as large as the children?

This time, the girl drop kicks the Red Wolf from above!?

The Red Wolf has been blown off!!

……

What has just happened? Didn't they just easily defeat a C-Rank monster?

Those small children? I feel like I have just seen something outrageous.

「「Defeated~!」」

「Ah, un. Good job~ Are you unhurt?」

「Un」

「Ok~ay」

The two children return back all smiles while dragging the Red Wolf behind them. Looking at the situation, this seems to be the usual occurrence.

I'm glad they are not hurt, but…… it was probably not just me who felt helpless just a while ago.

「Ah~, also. This time, Oniichan and the others will fight the monsters, why don't Allen and Elena take a day-off?」

「「? Understand~」」

That's right. That will save us the trouble.

No matter what, having small children fight with us here, we would be ashamed us the Knights.

Ah, Captain has approached Takumi-san all of sudden. He's probably curious why they are so strong.

He knew they were as strong as C-Rank adventurers? It's hard to believe, but Captain… you had such information……

「I told you I found these children malnourished in the Gaya Forest」

「I have heard that」

Please wait a moment.

I'm surprised that you went to the Gaya Forest before, but you have found them in there malnourished?

If they were thin at the time you have found them…… doesn't that mean they couldn't eat properly for an extended period of time?

「…… By that, you mean "the children have originally lived in this forest"…… right?」

「Ah!!」

「That's right. Were they defeating the monsters, or were they running away from them? I don't know how they lived until now yet, but they have certainly survived in the forest for several days」

『……』

If children enter this forest, they will instantly become monster feed.

Yet they survived. Isn't that an outrageous? It's an unbelievable thing.

Furthermore, now Takumi-san used the rare space-time magic this time……

When I glanced at Captain he was startled too, so he probably didn't know.

The cause is because Captain didn't inform us before the appointed day, but it's painful for me to not being able to investigate what kind of person he really is.

Even though I say that, it's normal not to tell about your abilities to other people, and because he didn't stay in Shirin for too long, I don't know how much I would be able to find out.

Maa~ still, I would be at least to investigate his reputation.

Ah…… why wasn't I more interested when he entered the town for the first time, It's late, but I regret.

After that, it was consecutive surprises.

First, I was surprised by the children's movements and endurance. They were running here and there from the start and didn't fall behind us who were steadily advancing.

Normal children would hand their hands full by trying to keep up…… no, they wouldn't be able to keep up?

Moreover, their gathering ability and knowledge are magnificent.

Magical Power Grass, Demon Grass, Shui weed, Bellana…… they bring back plant and fruit one after another.

Not only the plant types, but they also seem to know their characteristics well, they never touched plants they shouldn't be touching.

In comparison our Captain!!

「Captain, if you touch it bare handed you will get rash. Please, think a bit about why those children didn't gather it themselves but called Takumi-san instead! Even though I told you to『Stop working by instinct』so many times! Besides why do kids know, but a proper adult like you don't!! ———(Omitted)——— A person like you, every single time…… please learn a little bit!」

Use your brain a little!

I suddenly felt pulling while preaching Captain

「N?」

When I look at what's pulling me, aren't those the children pulling on my coat?

「What's the matter?」

「Here」

「For you」

The children present me something in a bag.

I receive the bag after crouching down to match the children's eyes. Isn't this a bag full of Iwami Moss?

Iwami Moss has been recently hard to obtain. Because of that, the inventory of the medicine it's used for (A wonder drug for itching feet) has been depleted.

Moreover, this medicine is used daily by 1/3 of the Knights (I don't use it) so not having it is a severe matter.

With this much, we should have enough for the whole division. If they are giving it to me, I will gratefully receive it.

「You are giving me this?」

「Un」

「For you~」

「Thank you very much」

「「Un!」」

I'm not fond that much of children, but…… they are cute, aren't they?

I unconsciously ended up patting their heads after seeing their shy smiles.

Other various facts came to light. Like the most recent boom of Shirin, the new shaped bread was Takumi-san's idea…… like Takumi-san can instakill an Orc……

Wasn't I surprised enough in a day to cover several months?

Honestly, I'm exhausted from being surprised. And yet, there are still four more days of the expedition to go. Can I hold until the end……

The next day was so calm it was creepy.

We did not encounter a monster for more than a half day.

Right at the moment I intended to end the investigation for today———

「It's a flare! We are rushing to join up!」

An emergency flare has been used. One of the two other teams is in need of help.

We have to hurry!

「What is that?」

「It's light from an emergency magic tool. We use it when encountering an unmanageable monster, when in need of assistance. One of the teams must be in trouble」

A magic tool used to call help. This is not used only be the Knights, but also by adventurers. It appears that Takumi-san doesn't know about it.

Which reminds me, he just joined the guild, right? Because of his strength, I completely forgot about him being a newcomer.

I lightly explain while on the way to the destination while being admired.

So he's no different from a newcomer in this regard……

「It would be better to hurry up?」

「Yes, that's right」

He confirms with Captain, but what are you planning to do?

「Then, we will go ahead」

「Yes?」

「Wind, gather around me and form a gale. 《Accel》」

Takumi-san lifts the children up in his arms and starts chanting.

Then, a frightening amount of wind bursts out, and he speeds ahead at incredible speed.

「Haa!? What's with that speed!」

「…… Wind, magic…… is it?」

…… That should be intermediate speed spell if I'm not mistaken.

That should be it, but the speed is way above that…… You shouldn't be able to run this fast normally.

He really is an out of the standard person……

「It's weird, right!?」

「Yes, it's considerable difference compared to other people」

「…… That fellow is really bullshitting me」

「It seems like that. If it's Takumi-san, he will probably do something about it, but let's also hurry up」

「…… Right」

The other team is in a predicament as they used a flare.

Even if he is not able to solve it by himself, he should be able to gain us time to arrive.

I'm leaving it to you, Takumi-san.

Idle Talk 4
What Are They?

I'm Rady. 20 years old.

D-Rank adventurer, and a member of B-Rank party『Black Twin Sword』.

This time, we have come to the town of Shirin because of a subjugation request from the Knights.

It's my first time, but Gray-san and others received this request once before.

Normally, I wouldn't be able to enter Gaya Forest with my strength. Therefore, I was told to wait in Shirin.

However, I hate being left behind!

Although I'm not equal in ability to Gray-san and others, I will be able to rank up to C-Rank soon. Being a C-Rank at my age is quite fast.

Gray-san broke under my obstinant attitude. I had to promise that I will absolutely obey every order.

Of course, I agreed. We can take the request together like this!

On the day of the request.

Just before the departure, a man 3-4 years younger than me with two children arrived at the meeting place.

「Good morning, Wald-sama」

The man with the children went for greetings with the Captain of the expedition.

Wha! Are those guys perhaps also going to the Gaya Forest!?

Is that guy an idiot? Is he planning to go for a picnic?

It seems I wasn't the only one thinking that.

Gray-san probably thought so too even the Knights were looking at them with strict gazes.

However, I heard that the Captain forcibly selected them to participate.

After that, the Knights' attitudes softened. That Captain is well-respected, so I feel like it can't be helped since he decided on that.

But, is he actually taking them along? They will become a burden, right?

Maa, they seem to be in a different team than us, so I don't have to mind it.

Do your best not to die.

We have begun the Gaya Forest investigation.

We have encountered a Giant Boar and an Orc on the first day. However, Gray-san and the Knights defeated them without any difficulties.

I was also slightly helpful!

However, the state of the forest is apparently strange.

Usually, we should encounter a little more monsters. Moreover, the forest itself is strangely quiet.

I myself don't understand, but Gray-san says so, so it must be true.

The second day wasn't different from the first.

「Bl, Bloody Wolf!!」

Is what I thought, but my thoughts abruptly collapsed.

「A pack in a place like this!? Randy! You concentrate on defending yourself!」

「Y, yes!」

B-Rank monster. We are assaulted by a pack of Bloody Wolves.

It's a troublesome opponent when alone, yet it's a whole pack. 1, 2, 3…… 7 in total.

On the other hand, we the five members of『Black Twin Sword』and 12 Knights of Shirin.

We need half of our men to defeat one of the Bloody Wolves.

We are at an overwhelming disadvantage.

One of the Knights immediately releases a red flare. It's to call for help.

Although the all of the teams have the same camping point today, it's unknown how far they are from us.

If we can't hold out until they come, we won't have a tomorrow.

We are forced into a defensive fight by the charging wolves.

With no chance to counterattack, we are slowly driven to a corner. I deflect the claws with the sword, but because I had not enough strength, my posture collapsed.

「Randy! Dodge!」

「Ku!!」

I roll on the ground at once after hearing Gray-san's voice, and successfully avoid the Bloody Wolf, but its claws grazed my arm.

「……」

「Randy, you alright?」

「Somehow……」

Although I answered like that, my legs don't move because of the fatigue.

I have to stand up! Is what I think, but my body doesn't listen to me.

Damn it! At this rate!!

When I was about to resign to die———

———*Don.*

「Wha! What!?」

!!!!!?

What have just happened!?

A sudden explosion and windstorm. Furthermore, a bad visibility because of a cloud of dust.

However, that cloud of dust immediately disappears.

When my visibility becomes clear, I see few of the Bloody Wolves staggering.

「Gyaun!」

Together with Bloody Wolf's cry, a man stuck a sword into it's back.

The man pulls up the sword from the wolf's back and mows down another Bloody Wolf in the striking distance.

It was killed in a single blow.

It's a person I recognize.

It's him! The man who brought the children.

He should be with a different team. That means help arrived? …… Is what I thought, but I don't see any other people around.

———*Dokon!*

「Wha!!!?」

This time, it happened right in front of my eyes.

Children fell from the sky and squashed Bloody Wolves on landing.

Haa!? It's a lie, right!? They sunk into the ground!!

I don't even have to confirm to figure out the wolves died.

What a thing. Four Bloody Wolves were defeated in an instant.

「Be careful, okay?」

「「Ye~s!」」

「O, oi!?」

The children face one of the remaining Bloody Wolves and start charging at it.

Gray-san leaks out a panicked voice.

Haa!? Wait a minute!

Are those two planning to fight a Bloody Wolf!?

That's reckless! Why did you send them off!

The children approach the Bloody Wolf and begin to attack it.

「Ya!」 「Hoi」

「Tou」 「Ha!」

They are fighting with the Bloody Wolf on equal terms!?

This must be a joke, right!?

Even Gray-san would have troubles fighting a Bloody Wolf one on one. The children are able to fight such monster!?

Is this a dream? It's a dream, right?

No, no, the Bloody Wolf is aching with pain. This is real.

But, this is a dreamlike even without a doubt.

「Horyaa~」

「Nsho!」

They get distance when the opponent attacks, and they shout when they attack.

The children are fighting effortlessly.

「「Here, here♪」」

Uwa~ they are even provoking it…… just what is going……

「Yoo!」「Hoi」

Ah, the Bloody Wolf's posture crumbled.

「「Tou!」」

「Gyaun!」

The two didn't miss the opportunity and kick the wolf with all their might.

The Bloody Wolf wasn't able to endure the kicks and got blown away.

「「Ah」」

Ah……

The Bloody Wolf, the kids sent flying crashes into the Bloody Wolf the guardian-like man is fighting.

The two wolves collide and roll on the ground.

The man looks startled this way, but seeing the children his face shows consent.

He then approaches the wolf and stabs it with his sword.

He finished it, right?

That means, these guys… everything…… they defeated everything, right……

「Oi! You alright!?」

Ah…… a knight of other team has arrived. It's already over, though……

…… Ah, un. Rather, we were saved……

It can't be helped that I needed a little more time to return to reality after witnessing something so shocking, right?

Chapter 28
A Moment of Relief

「「Onii~chan!」」

The two children jump at me more enthusiastic than usual.

I was a little surprised, but I was able to catch them and gather them up in my arms.

「You two seem so happy」

「「It was fun♪」」

…… Un. You two were playing, after all.

「Are you unhurt?」

「「Un!」」

I make sure if the two are not injured, but it seems to be okay.

I understood that they could defeat a B-Rank monster without getting injured.

Though I intended to do my best to avoid the situations Allen and Elena have to fight, but it's also important to support them to my best ability.

「The hell is this~!!」

After arriving and seeing the situation, Wald-sama who froze in a spot with his eyes open finally snapped back to reality and shouted.

The other members are having a similar reaction.

Injured colleagues, 7 Bloody Wolf corpses and two children in high spirits…… Ah~ Un. It certainly may be a delicate scene.

「…… Isaac, see the injured first and treat their wounds」

「Understood」

Hearing Wald-sama's orders, Risner-sama takes a few subordinates and checks on the injured.

「Iris, check on injured」

「Yes!」

Iris-san also goes to check on the injured. She can use Light Magic, so she's able to cure severely wounded people with Healing Magic.

I can use Healing Magic too, but… umm…… they don't need my help… right?

Indeed, I don't want to show more than this.

Un, I will leave it to everyone.

「Now then, Takumi. Did you defeat all these Bloody Wolves yourself?」

Uo!! Wald-sama inquiries with a menacing voice.

He's unreasonably scary. Moreover, his stare is piercing?

「…… No. You are wrong?」

Allen and Elena helped me. I didn't do it alone.

「Correction. Did you and the two shorties defeat all these Bloody Wolves?」

「…… That's correct」

The brightness in Wald-sama's eyes became even sharper.

Seems like I won't be able to deceive him.

「…… I see…… that helped. There's no time to dismantle, but collect everything, for now」

「Roger」

I stood steady ready for next Wald-sama's incomprehensible action, but he lightly claps *ponpon* on my shoulders, then he went to check with Isaac-san on the situation.

…… It didn't look like he was angry.

First of all, let's do as told and collect the corpses of the Bloody Wolves.

When I finished collecting them, the emergency treatment ended as well.

Unfortunately, the low-grade drugs and Iris-san's Healing Magic is not enough to help all members recover completely. I see bandaged people here and there.

Only about half is completely recovered.

After a little bit, the last team joined up with us.

But, it wasn't possible to immediately move to the camping point so we have changed the location of the camp.

「Farius, I want to confirm the situation with you, is that all right?」

「Ou. No problem」

The leader of the team that was attacked by the Bloody Wolves, Captain of the Third Unit of Shirin Knights, Farius Tierra-sama.

Tierra-sama is the eldest son of a Count House and Wald-sama's friend.

Also, he's the person supporting his body with a sword who called out to me before.

Although he was cured with Iris-san's Healing Magic, his face is still a little bit pale from the loss of blood.

「Even though I say that, the one who defeated the pack of the Bloody Wolves which assaulted us was…… Takumi? They saved us. Nevertheless, Wald. You have brought an outrageous fellow along. He defeated the enemies all of us couldn't match without getting hurt」

「Although I was the one who brought Takumi and the children along, I didn't know that much about his real ability. Speaking frankly, it was unexpected」

It's tough being the subject of the topic, though……

I can't even leave because Wald-sama forcefully made me sit next to him……

「It's hard to believe, isn't it?」

「Brad, it's certain that Takumi-san possesses tremendous ability」

「Isaac? I see… Even without conclusive evidence, if you are the one saying so, it must be true…」

The leader of the last team to join up, Vice Captain of the Third Unit of Shirin Knights, Brad Ganforg-sama listens with a bewildered expression.

「Hahaha~ Takumi doesn't look strong at all, after all~」

「Uwa!」

Wald-sama claps on my back while laughing.

Slightly painful…… moreover, above all, my whole body is shaking.

「Captain again…… the children will kick you flying, you know?」

The kids growl while glaring at Wald-sama again.

When Risner-sama brings it up, they are already ready to jump at any moment.

「「Uu~」」

「I, I'm not bullying him or anything!?」

Wald-sama defends himself in panic, but the two didn't stop growling at him.

「Allen-kun, Elena-san. Next time Captain does something rude, it's all right to kick him flying okay? However, make sure he doesn't die in the process please」

「「Un!」」

「Oi!? Isaac, why are you giving them permission on your own!?」

「It's all right. I told them to not kill you. Start learning please if you find it disagreeable」

「……」

Hahaha~ If you tell that to the children, they will really kick Wald-sama flying, you know? Allen and Elena responded with sparkling eyes…

Rather, aren't those two relatively good with Risner-sama? Moreover, it's because he always stops Wald-sama when he jabs me… is that really because of that simple reason?

Also, isn't the way Risner-sama is handling Wald-sama gradually getting rougher?

「Iya~ Looking at the children, I got worried that our Captain is too much of a good for nothing. I intend to take this opportunity to make him learn properly」

「Haa…… is that so?」

As if hearing the voice in my mind, Risner-sama answers while smiling.

Your face is smiling, but your eyes are not!? Just how much trouble does Wald-sama bring to Risner-sama every day!?

「「Can't~?」」

They probably saw my troubled expression. Allen and Elena ask to confirm. However, if these two plead me like that…… I can't refuse.

「Ah~… You got Risner-sama's permission so… is that really alright?」

「Yes, I don't mind」

「Oi!?」

「Want to have a kick at once?」

「「Can I?」」

「Why!?」

Tierra-sama, Ganforg-sama and everyone around who heard our conversation starts laughing.

Wald-sama starts looking around timidly.

◊ – ♦ – ◊

「However, don't you think the forest is a bit strange?」

After the laughing calmed down, Teirra-sama suddenly says with a serious expression.

「Yes. Our unit encountered almost no monsters since yesterday. Speaking frankly, it's strange」

Ganforg-sama reports while frowning.

「I was thinking it's strange since a while ago. Rudolph-san is of the same opinion」

「Ah. The number of monsters we have encountered is too few. Despite that, the monsters attack in groups」

Every subjugation unit feels that something strange is going on in the forest.

Based on that, we should be talking about the future plan.

「「Ah」」

「N? Is something the… matter……!!」

In the middle of the conversation, Allen and Elena suddenly leak out small voices.

Feeling somehow uncomfortable, I look towards the direction the two are looking at.

There, I see a big serpent coiled around a thick tree aiming at us.

「Wha…! Above!!」

I raise my voice to notify the others who didn't notice yet.

What a thing! My attention was elsewhere so I wasn't aware something like that got so close to us.

「Wha!!!」

「!!!!!」

Shurushuru the sound of hissing resounds.

Everyone is lost for words because of its size.

「… Evil Viper!!」

An enormous snake tens of meters in length. An A-Rank monster, Evil Viper has appeared.

Chapter 29
vs. Wicked Snake

「Sha――――――!!」

Evil Viper jumps down from the tree with its mouth open wide.

「「「Uwa――――――!!」」」

It swoops down on the Knights who were resting near the tree.

「「Yaa!」」

Allen and Elena had approached the Evil Viper before I noticed, they get past the Knights, ready to kick the Evil Viper's jaw.

「! Allen, Elena get away!《Wind Cutter》」

I quickly get the two in panic and release a Wind Cutter.

Allen, Elena… when did you move there? No, un…… you have excellent moves, but… don't surprise me like that……

The Evil Viper got pushed 1-2 meters away, but there was no visible damage.

「Earth, penetrate《Earth Needle》」

Several sharp pillars project from the ground in pursuit of the Evil Viper.

「You guys, quickly withdraw!」

Farius Tierra-sama shouts loudly and evacuates the Knights who are near the Evil Viper.

The one who used who used the Earth Magic a little while ago was apparently Tierra-sama.

The Tierra House is famous for producing people specialized in Earth Magic. He himself is probably a knight with Earth Magic as a specialty.

「Takumi, right? You were great help」

「No, Tierra-sama had a great follow-up」

「I don't like being called with my house name. Farius is all right. Rather than those, these pipsqueaks are amazing. They reacted faster than anyone」

「These two acted intuitively…」

Farius-sama stands beside and adresses me.

If not for this situation, I would like to have a nice long talk, but we can't afford that at the moment.

「Evil Viper, huh. A nasty fellow has appeared. Oi, wounded people fall back! Don't get in the way or all of us will die」

Rudolph-san clicks his tongue, prepares his halberd and tells the injured to stay away.

I also give instructions to Allen and Elena to stay away from the Evil Viper.

「Iris, Gilm! You two provide support. Zack! Don't act carelessly!!」

「I know!!」

Iris-san and Gilm-san take some distance, and set up their bows and throwing knives.

Zack-san draws his sword and lines up beside Rudolph-san.

「Gill, provide support」

From another party,『Flaming Soldiers Troupe』, swordsmen Gantz-san and Mick-san, and a mage Gillbard-san take battle positions.

The Knights who can move also draw their swords.

As expected, the half of the Knights that were attacked by the Bloody Wolves and『Black Twin Sword』party fell back.

「Seiya!!」

When the battle preparations finished, Rudolph-san begins by slashing his halberd.

「Tsk! Ineffective as I expected. Didn't leave a single scratch」

It has received almost no damage so far.

Evil Viper's body——its shiny black surface doesn't get damaged by both physical attacks and magic. It's a first-grade material for protective gear. Soft and light attacks won't injure it.

———*Doshin.*

Evil Viper's tail strikes the ground.

Uo! What a terrible sound. If that hits, won't one receives a good amount of damage?

「Ha!」

「Yaa!」

「Fire, congregate《Fire Ball》」

「Light, pierce《Light Arrow》」

Offensive ranged attacks. Magic attacks. One after another hits the target, but to no effect.

Where is its weak point?

I observe the Evil Viper while shooting magic.

「「「Guwa!!」」」

Some of the knights get blown away by the viper's tail.

The Evil Viper hisses as if sneering at us.

And the next moment, it rushes towards Zack-san.

Fast!

「Gu!!」

Zack-san tried to avoid, but the Evil Viper curved it's body and instantly changed directions. It rammed into him, and he got blown off.

Furthermore, it continues to charge into other knights.

「「Unyuu~」」

Eeeeh~!?

Allen and Elena caught the Evil Viper's tail and stopped its charge.

Again!? Mou~ why don't you obediently wait for me~!!

The Evil Viper's charge was stopped thanks to those two? The damage has been thereby suppressed, but… However, see, because you stopped the Evil Viper's charge, it turned towards you two~!

「Allen, Elena! It's dangerous so release the tail and get away from it!!」

I immediately retrieve a knife from《Infinite Storage》.

Then, I throw it at the Evil Viper who is glaring at Allen and Elena.

If the skin is hard, how about its eyes?

「Sha――――――!!」

The skillfully thrown knife stabs into the Evil Viper's left eye.

The Evil Viper shouts in pain and starts violently thrashing around.

Dotan, batan, the sound of the ground getting hit resounds.

「Nice, Takumi! Haaaa!」

Wald-sama envelops his sword with a flame and slashes at the Evil Viper.

Is that a magic sword?

Ju… the sound and smell of burning spreads. The attack seemed to work a bit, but Wald-sama's sword was repelled.

Then, the one-eyed Evil Viper furiously stares over here——at me.

I suddenly had an unpleasant feeling. And at once, Allen and Elena switched their gazes towards me.

「「Ukya!」」

It aimed for that moment.

The Evil Viper hit Allen and Elena with all its might.

「Allen! Elena!!」

The two are blown two meters away.

Shit! What a terrible mistake!

「Iris!」

「Understood!」

At Rudolph-san instructions, Iris-san rushes to the two.

「……」

I also wanted to run over immediately.

However, the one-eyed Evil Viper aimed for me as it fixedly watched me.

If I run over to Allen and Elena now, the Evil Viper will definitely charge at me.

Therefore, I can't leave from this place.

「it's okay. They will be able to get up immediately」

「Yes, I know」

Rudolph-san calls out to me who is worried about the children.

Certainly, Allen and Elena got up immediately.

Therefore, I calm myself down, but a certain emotion gushes out.

「… Rudolph-san, can you gain me a bit of time?」

「What do you plan to do?」

「I will use an advanced Wind Magic」

「…… You can use it?」

「I have never used it before. However, I feel like I will definitely be able to use it now」

Un, there's no problem proficiency wise. I should be able to use it.

Even if I normally wouldn't, I feel like I would be able to do anything at this moment.

「…… I understand. Leave it to us」

「Thank you. Separate from the Evil Viper on my sign please. If possible, please evacuate behind me」

「Roger」

After requesting Rudolph-san, I start gathering a significant amount of magical power.

I extend my right hand and concentrate all the magical power I gather into it.

How much…… is this much okay?

I give the signal to Rudolph-san, and everyone evacuates behind me. And then, I activate the magic.

The Evil Viper who wasn't being restricted anymore started creeping towards me.

「Sha————!」

The Evil Viper creeping on the ground raises its head and cries out.

「Wind. Reap my enemy《Wind Edge》」

Just like reaping grass with a sickle…… a wind scythe aims towards the Evil Viper's neck.

———*Zashu!!!*

The condensed wind explodes.

That instant, the Evil Viper's head *supan* snapped and rolled on the ground. Without the head, the rest of the body crumbled to the ground.

The moment I thought it's finally over——

————*Mishimishi… doshin, mishimishi… doshin!*

「Ge!」

Many trees thick as three to four adult men joining hands, fall to the ground.

The wind flew far better than I expected.

『……』

「Ahahahahahaha～～」

Shit! I used too much magical power……

And I even thought I stopped increasing magical power at the right moment……

It looks like if I used a bit more magical power, there would be a recreation spot created inside the forest.

Advanced magic, scary!

The spectacle of an A-Rank monster was splendidly blown away.

Chapter 30
Tidying Up

「How powerful magic can you use……」

「Hahaha～」

Rudolph-san who promptly came to his senses says tiredly.

「Takumi, Evil Viper's blood is a precious material. Quickly store it in your《Infinite Storage》before everything spills out」

I follow Rudolph-san instructions and quickly tidy up the Evil Viper.

There, Allen and Elena run up to me.

「「Onii～chan! Ama～zing!」」

「Ahahaha～ Thanks. Allen, Elena, how are your injuries?」

「「Fi～ne」」

Allen and Elena who saw my magic became slightly excited. After holding them up in my arms, I confirm their safety first.

There, Iris-san approached.

「Iris-san, thank you very much」

「…… Yeah. Don't worry about it. I didn't do that much. Ah… the two didn't have any large injuries, it was only a scratch. I healed them just in case, but there may be a bump so look over their state for a while」

I thank Iris-san while embracing Allen and Elena. She herself is a mage, so her cheeks stiffened a bit under the overwhelming power of the wind.

However, I perceived that she tried her best to act normally. Both Rudolph-san and she talked to me normally without making a distance…… they are really good people.

Still, Allen's and Elena's injuries seemed to be only a few scratches. Their bodies are more sturdy than that of an ordinary person as expected.

I got goosebumps because an ordinary person would receive serious injuries or even possibly die from that.

I will be careful, so something like that never happens again! Yeah, I have made up my mind.

「Takumi, collect all the trees you knocked down too」

「Eh? All of it!?」

「Naturally! Are you trying to make those splendid tree rot in vain!? You shouldn't have a problem with that much magical power!」

The capacity of《Inifnite Storage》depends on the user's magical power. An ordinary user would be able to store about several tons of items. In my case, I should be all right with tens of thousands.

As the name suggests, limitless. I can store without limits. Rudolph-san probably said that because he understood.

I have collected every fallen tree.

And then, after the injured were treated we returned to the original place.

◊ – ♦ – ◊

Now then, there's one more thing to tidy up.

「Takumi, you saved us. Still, what an unbelievable magic…… wha!? O, oi!?」

Ignoring Wald-sama, I approached a certain knight and swung my leg at him. Because I used the power of the wind, he instantly fell down.

「Uwa! …… gu」

I trample down on that man's throat, take out my katana and graze it against his cheek.

「Takumi!?」

「W, what!?」

Surprised voices resound from around.

「Don't move」

I calmly say to the man under my feet.

It wasn't that of a loud voice, but it was enough to make him stop trying to run away.

「Takumi, what are you doing!?」

Wald-sama calls out again.

「What am I doing…… is it? Please ask this fellow instead」

「Ha? Sajesh? Sajesh, you, did you do something?」

「I didn't do anything!」

「……. Takumi?」

「How dare you~ Even though you eyes were so full of thirst for blood just a while ago, to say that you didn't do anything……」

「Come again!? Are you sure?」

Everyone listening gets surprised.

「It's the truth. He was glaring at Takumi since he joined us. I have turned a blind eye because I judged he wouldn't hurt Takumi, but. As expected, doing something like that from behind while I was putting my life on the line, I also couldn't leave it alone」

『Wha!?』

Looks like Rudolph-san noticed it too. As one would expect from him.

The people who haven't noticed became even more surprised.

「Even I who is unrelated is bothered by it. Takumi had no choice, but to be conscious all the time that he is being a target. And yet, the actual damage actually fell on the pipsqueaks」

Yes. Allen and Elena got injured because of this fellow.

「…… No way. The reason the two suddenly turned around and were attacked by the Evil Viper……」

「They felt this guy's thirst for blood and promptly turned around」

Rudolph-san explains everything in my stead.

That's right. At that time, this man's thirst for my blood swelled up for an instant. Because of that, Allen and Elena reacted to the thirst for my blood and turned around.

These children are very sensitive to negative feelings against me. Because of that, they unconsciously responded to it and turned around.

「Sajesh… you……」

「It's a lie!! Stop talking crap!」

Sajesh is resisting even after all of that.

「People might have believed you if only I said it. However, a genuine A-Rank Rudolph-san explained it himself. And you say that this is crap? Stop joking around!! 」

With only my testimony, there would be probably only a few people who would believe me. In fact, there wasn't anyone else who noticed his thirst for blood… That doesn't mean the Knights are incompetent. It's just that they weren't conscious of their colleague.

I think Rudolph-san explained personally because he understood.

「Ugu」

“Confess it” with those words, Sajesh crumbled completely.

「You! You are in the wrong!! A commoner like you who came from who knows where favored by Captain Ruven!!」

N? Captain Ruven?

Sajesh’s reason was a bit unexpected.

「…… Wald-sama?」

「……」

When I look at Wald-sama, he instantly looks away. He keeps on looking away.

Because it seemed like I will never get my answer, I look towards Risner-sama for the explanation. Then, Risner-sama starts inevitably explaining.

「He’s Sajesh Krantz. He’s a member of the third unit, but that… he has openly declared his love for Captain……」

「L, love!? Not respect or admiration!?」

「Yes, it’s a love…」

Eeh!? He loves him…… seriously……

A masculine knight and a slender, handsome knight…… no need to guess, aren’t they favorite food of rotten women?

Haa~ I, it's my first time seeing it in person… As expected, they are even in the Knights. No, is that precisely because the Knights is a male society?

Therefore, I use the wind and quietly take distance from Sajesh.

Eh, does that perhaps mean that Sajesh recognized me as his love rival!?

Why does he have such misunderstanding!?

It's a mystery how he came to that conclusion. Because I received a slight shock, I call Allen and Elena for healing.

「Then, the reason this person has picked quarrel with me is that he thinks I have snagged Captain Wald from him?」

「Wrong!!」

Wald-sama cries out loudly.

「I definitely have no interest in keeping men company!!!」

Hohou~ To deny it so strongly… right?

「Wald-sama seems like a person who trains all the time, so it's unlikely he has a history with women. Then…… in fact……」

「Takumi!? What are you saying!!」

「No, no, isn't it all right? Each person has his own interests, please don't mind us」

「Yo… you, stop joking! I said that you are wrong!!」

Indeed, it makes you want to tease him, right?

「Takumi-san. Please stop teasing Captain anymore」

「Ah, yes」

Since Risner-sama stopped me, I will end my teasing of Wald-sama here.

「Teasing… Takumi, youu!!」

Wald-sama finally notices that I was teasing him.

「I'm really sorry that we have involved Takumi-san in the circumstances of us Knights. Our supervision was too poor. However, how about entrusting the punishment to the Knights?」

「I don't mind」

Risner-sama apologized and asked to entrust Sajesh's punishment to the Knights.

Of course, I agreed.

Risner-sama got taken aback by my simple acknowledgment.

「…… Is that okay? It reached the extent the children got injured, you know?」

「That is so. However, in the end, Allen and Elena got off only with some scratches, and I also am responsible for leaving this person's thirst for blood just like that. However, if there's a next time, I won't be so linient」

Certainly, getting Allen and Elena injured is not tolerable, however, while that may be true, solving him with violence or killing him off…… I won't do something like that. I'm not such person.

Because I have no problem with it, I leave the Knights deal with Sajesh.

「I will also apologize. I'm sorry for my subordinate」

「Thank you very much for your open-mindeness」

Farius-sama and Ganforg-sama lower their heads.

It has been decided that the other Knights will monitor Sajesh, while his punishment will be decided later.

Although I say punishment, it was just a thirst for blood, so I don't think it will be a heavy punishment. A wage cut? Demotion or discharge from Knights probably won't happen.

All is fine if he doesn't pick up a quarrel with me anymore.

◊ – ♦ – ◊

「Is it over? Takumi, I'm hungry. Food, please」

「…… Eh?」

After tidying up, Rudolph-san suddenly says.

I couldn't understand for a moment.

No, no, that's the line you would normally say to Cain-san or Heinz-san, right? Why are you saying that to me!?

「The most important person of the battle, me is starving. I don't want to eat dried meat or a hard bread, I want to eat something delicious」

「Allen is hungry too～」

「Elena too～」

Ah, un. I have to make a meal for Allen and Elena. It's almost time for the sun to set, they have been moving all afternoon, huh. Of course, they'd be hungry.

Well～ I'm grateful to Rudolph-san and the others, so there's no problem making something, but……

Chirari, I glance and the Knights. The Knights who weren't with us don't know what's going on, but the eyebrows of the Knights in our team turned into "ノヽ".

They want me to prepare their meals too, but they are afraid to ask because of the matter with Sajesh. They are making such expressions.

Speaking frankly, I don't have any good feelings towards Sajesh. However, it's not like I'm angry at the other Knights……

Now then, what should I do?

「Make, many～」

「Will help～」

Seeing me troubled, Allen and Elena grab my hands and drag me to Cain-san and Heinz-san while talking.

「…… Eh? That……」

Cain-san and Heinz-san troubled with an answer, look at children, me, Wald-sama and Risner-sama…… then, their eyes wander.

「「Can't~?」」

「…… It's not like that」

Allen and Elena support me.

Mou~! These children are seriously good children!!

I could not bear it anymore and patted their heads.

「Because Allen and Elena are hungry, won't you help me out?」

「Y, yes! What shall we start with!」

Since it's been decided, let's start right away!

The gathered mushrooms, wild grass, the dismantled Orc meat at hand, with the help of the two Knights we have prepared a lot of food which everyone ate.

Quite a delicious meal if I say so myself. I'm satisfied!

◊ – ♦ – ◊

The next day, it was judged that there were too many injured people and continuing the investigation would be dangerous. It has been decided to return to the town after three days of the expedition.

Chapter 31
First Shopping

A day after returning from the expedition, we were leisurely spending time in the inn's room.

Therefore, I decided to confirm my status which I did not see for a while.

Status
【Name】Takumi Kayano
【Race】Human?［Wind God’s retainer (Temporary)］
【Occupation】Mage
【Age】20
【Level】25
【Skills】
Light Magic 66 | Dark Magic 62
Wind Magic 169 | Water Magic 50
Space Magic 109 | Life Magic 124
Swordsmanship 54 | Throwing 49
Appraisal 209 | Dismantling 119
Familiars 22 | Training 12
Cooking 113 | Sewing 23
Washing 12 | Cleaning 31
Crafting 39 | Gathering 42
Arithmetics 108 | Reading 125
Concealment 37 | Detection 35
Oracle 12
Abnormal Status Resistance 300 | Mental Status Resistance 300
Physical Attack Resistance 300 | Magic Attack Resistance 300
【Titles】
Transmigrated From a Different World
Blessed by the God of Creation, Malianor
Friend of Wind God Sylphreel
Savior
Conqueror of Low-Grade Dungeon
Monster Contractor
【Contracted Beasts】
Fenrir (Joule)
Thunderhawk (Bolt)
Celestial Tiger (Feat)

My level increased considerably, and my skill proficiencies rose too.

A new entry,【Contracted Beasts】appeared.

And, strangely, I have obtained【Water Magic】.

Because its proficiency is not in the single digits, I think it means that I didn't learn it naturally, but it's something that I was given. It's not something the Wind God Syl could give me directly, but I think he somehow has his hands in it.

Speaking of Water Magic, it's something Allen and Elena have, but never learned how to use it.

But, unlike the advanced knowledge about Wind Magic that was implemented into me, I have little to no knowledge about Water Magic…

In the first place, because all the knowledge about the use of magic was implemented, I have no idea how to teach them.

Would they sell magic books in the bookstores? Let's look for a bookstore later.

◊ – ♦ – ◊

「「O~ne, two~, three~, fo~ur, five~ ……. ten!」」

I put the teaching of magic aside for now and taught Allen and Elena numbers.

「Yes, well done. This is a copper coin. What goes after 10 copper coins?」

「「This!」」

「Correct~」

「「Ehehe~」」

In the beginning, I thought it would be nice if I could teach them to count up to 100, but the two learned it just like that.

Therefore, I greedily taught them to count up to 10,000♪

And then, I lined up coins by ten side by side, 10 Copper coins, 10 Large Copper coins…… first of all, I taught them about five kind of coins.

「Then, next is 54G」

「「N, this…… here!」」

「Correct~」

「「Yatta~」」

When I ask for a specific amount, Allen and Elena correctly count and present me with 5 Large Copper coins and 4 Copper coins.

They were nervously presenting the coins at first, but they got the gist of it after doing it for several times, and now they have confident expressions.

When I pat their heads while saying『You did well』, the two look very happy.

Seriously adorable!!

「Then, if I shopped for 26G with this?」

「「N, umm…… this!」」

I only taught them about five kinds of coins, but they accurately grasped their value.

Therefore, this time, I handed them a Silver coin and asked them to return me the correct amount. The two correctly returned me 7 Large Copper coins and 4 Copper coins.

Not only addition, but they are also able to subtract. Aren't they amazing?

If they were able to come this far, putting it into practice follows, right?

◊ – ♦ – ◊

「Allen, Elena. Is there something you want to buy?」

We went to the shopping street at once.

The store we went to first deals in dried food. They are selling the dried fruits Allen and Elena often eat for snacks.

The shop assistant is a middle-aged woman, and because this woman always looks at Allen and Elena with gentle gaze when we are here, I have decided on this shop to be Allen's and Elena's first shopping place.

「Welcome. Have you found what you want?」

Sure enough, the woman matched the children's eyes and picked up the jar with products, so it's easier to see.

「Can you show what you want and say『Please』, Allen?」

「Un! This! Please!」

Allen says while pointing at an apricot-like dried fruit in the jar.

「Yes. Shuri fruit, is it? How many would you like?」

「Umm……. five!」

After Allen was asked about the number of pieces he wanted, he glanced at me first, so I showed him “5” with my palm. Then, Allen correctly answered the woman with the right number.

「5 pieces, is it? That will cost you 75G」

「Urmm…… here!」

「Ara? …… Maa! It’s precise! How admirable～」

The woman got surprised the moment Allen took out the money. She then looked at me, and I nodded at her with the meaning of request. My meaning seemed to have conveyed properly, as she faced Allen right away.

Allen took out coins from his pouch and handed them to the woman. The woman received the money, got surprised that the amount was right and praised Allen.

「Next is Elena, okay?」

「Un! Elena, this! Please!」

「Yes. Riigo fruit. How many would you like?」

「Five!」

Elena who could observe the exchange between the woman and Allen had a smoother time.

「Yes. Then, that makes 60G」

「Ummm…… here!」

「Yes. That’s just right. How admirable～」

The woman also praised Elena well.

It really helps she praised them equally.

「「We did it~?」」

「Un. You did really well~ Admirable, admirable」

Because the two clung to me after storing the dried fruit in their pouches, I patted their heads a lot.

「Thank you very much for going along」

When I thank the woman who helped Allen and Elena with their first shopping, the woman said『Don't worry about it』.

Together with the thanks, I bought some dried fruit, nuts, spices and fine powders in a reasonable amount.

◊ – ♦ – ◊

We went to the bookstore next.

Although the objective is to purchase books related to magic, I also need to buy some novels.

I haven't read anything since arriving at Aetherdia. I read dozens of novels a month back on Earth, so I'm already missing it.

The paper is also produced on Aetherdia, so it's quite inexpensive. Because of that, the books are sold at reasonable price.

A paper is a high-class item, and books are luxuries! I'm glad it wasn't that kind of pattern.

Good amount of books is displayed on the bookshelves.

Books about magic, medicinal plants, monster books with pictures and their special traits, poetry and scriptures. Of course, there are also many in the novels genre. Maa~ most of the contents of the stories are about adventures and love, though.

After looking around the shop for a while, I found『Magic Basics』『List of Incantations』, these two books.

Not necessary for me, but I thought it would be easier to explain to Allen and Elena, so I brought encyclopedias like『Complete Works of Plants』『Complete Works of Monsters』and returned to the inn.

Chapter 32
Rank Up

「Takumi-san!」

We visit the Adventurer's Guild today. It's to complete the procedures required for us to receive the Gaya Forest expedition request reward.

Risner-sama said to come to the guild to receive the reward the other day.

When we enter the building, Luna-san jumps out from behind the counter.

「Luna-san? What's the matter?」

「I was waiting for you!! Now then, let's go to the Guild Master! Hey, quickly! Allen-kun, Elena-chan too, come quickly」

「「!! Onii~chan~」」

Guild Master?

While not understanding, Luna-san drags me deeper into the guild, and takes me to the Guild Master's office. Allen and Elena trot after me while confused.

「Master, Takumi-san has arrived so I brought him」

「Ah, come in」

When Luna-san knocked at the door and stated her business, she immediately received a response from the other side.

When I opened the door, I saw a man with gray hair sitting on the front office desk. The man stands from his chair and shows us inside.

「I work as the Master of Shirin's Adventurer's Guild. Johann is my name」

「I'm Takumi Kayano. These children are Allen and Elena. It's nice to meet you」

This man is the Guild Master. He seems to know about me, but I introduced myself just in case.

The Guild Master urges us to sit on a sofa in the middle of the room. I sit on the sofa as told, Allen and Elena sit on both of my sides.

「……. This man? He doesn't seem like it…… However, if Ruven-dono and Rudolph-dono are saying so, it can't be wrong……」

Wald-sama and Rudolph-san?

While I let Allen and Elena sit down on the sofa, the Guild Master mutters something to himself. I wasn't able to hear properly, but the two's names came up, right?

「…… Umm?」

「Oh no, I was told leaving your rank as is would be foolish. However, you don't look that strong to me……」

It appears that the business was about a rank up.

Which reminds me, Wald-sama and Rudolph-san were talking about something like that in the Gaya Forest. The talk went quite quickly……

And then, the Guild Master looks directly at me and states bluntly.

「Don't think badly of me. I have initially raised to the post of Guild Master by doing secretary work, I don't know much about fighting. But, seeing adventurers for so long I have developed an eye for strong individuals, but…… unlike the other adventurers I have seen before…… I don't understand well…」

To adventurers, being told『You don't look that strong』is something that would make them angry.

Actually, since my neurons were destroyed once before……

Therefore, the Guild Master's standard for judging adventurers can't be applied to me.

Also, the aura of the strong? Is it because I don't have something like that?

At any rate, I didn't go through the "getting stronger little by little" process, so it's impossible to have that.

「…… Well, you real ability was without a doubt endorsed by those two. I intend to make you an A-Rank」

「Eeh? A-Rank!?」

I thought it would be C-Rank, but A-Rank?

To be honest, I got so surprised a strange voice left my mouth.

「What about examination and such?」

「There's no problem since Ruven-dono and Rudolph-dono confirmed your ability. You have defeated Bloody Wolves and Evil Viper, right?」

You have completely given up your judgment of me not looking that strong, didn't you…… is it okay to rank up that easily?

Whether it is a nobility and captain of the Knight Wald-sama or Rudolph-san who is a high-rank adventurer who guaranteed my ability, it is, after all, information from someone else. But, if the Guild Master accepted it so quickly, he must trust those two quite a lot.

「So, an A-Rank?」

「The Guild Master's authority can grant rank only up to A-Rank. An approval of several Guild Masters is needed for S-Rank, so that's indeed impossible for me」

It's the opposite, opposite! I was uneasy because my rank raised too much!

Nobody can complain about not becoming an S-Rank!

「According from what I heard, those children are also strong. What do you want to do?」

「…… What to do?」

「I can also give rank to these children, but if children like that receive a high rank it will most likely have the opposite effect. But, if they at E-Rank you won't be able to accept high-rank requests because your party will stay at low level」

Ah, indeed.

Because the members' average rank determines the party rank, the party rank at this rate would be "D" I think?

It's not problem for me, but if the Guild needed me to take a request I would be able to……

He asked for our convenience rather than going straight for the profit first.

Chirari, when I glance at Allen and Elena, they obediently sit while smiling at me. They are not alerted at all.

It's no doubt that this Guild Master is a good person.

In that case, let's compromise.

「I'm okay without raising the rank of the two, but…… if it's a problem for the guild how about increasing their rank to D?」

「Fumu~ If that's the case…… the party rank would be C? That is reasonable……」

If Allen and Elena become D-Rank, the party rank will become C. It's possible to receive requests that are one rank higher, in other words, B-Rank requests. A-Rank requests are very rare, so we will be able to receive almost every requests.

「Umu. Well then, let's finish the procedure」

◊ – ♦ – ◊

We left the office of the Guild Master, went to the counter to update the Guild Card, and received the reward which was our original purpose of coming here.

When everything was over, Luna-san looked at me with sparkling eyes as if she was expecting something.

「Now then, Takumi-san!」

「Umm…… what is it?」

Did Luna-san and I make some kind of a promise?

「Materials, the materials~! Please sell me the materials from Gaya Forest~ I have received info from Rudolph-san that Takumi-san has a lot in his possession!」

「Ah, so it's about that」

「That's right! I have waited for Takumi-san's arrival!」

It seems that she marked the Gaya Forest materials. Indeed, Luna-san said something like『Please get a lot』.

I have several Red Wolves and Bloody Wolves so it may not be a bad idea to sell them.

And then some medicinal plants? Allen and Elena worked hard and got a lot, so it may be alright to sell some?

「Should I take them out here?」

「Ah! That's right, sorry. But, it's okay! I have secured the biggest warehouse that will even fit the Evil Viper! I will lead you there right away~」

Luna-san knew I have Evil Viper in my possession. Did you heard that from Rudolph-san too……

Ah, that's right, I'm in charge of looking after the Evil Viper, but the Knights and the other three adventurer parties gave up their rights. Indeed, I refrained from receiving a whole corpse of an A-Rank monster, but…… I was ignored.

Therefore, the whole Evil Viper eventually became ours.

「Over here」

We were taken to the Guild's largest warehouse. Certainly, if it's this place, it will fit if straight, but it will be pretty close if the body bends.

Luna-san contacted the dismantling staff beforehand. They are full of motivation.

But, there's something I have to check first.

「I'd like the Evil Viper's skin for our protective skin, but…」

Because I felt like it's not needed, we didn't use protective gear until now.

A normal shirt and pants with some magic tool accessories are what I usually use.

Allen and Elena are the same.

However, after Allen and Elena received an attack, I started thinking it may not be that bad to use it.

Heavy armor is not possible, but leather breastplate, gauntlets and such would be good. Also, strong boots that suit Allen's and Elena's fighting style.

BI think that the Evil Viper's skin is ideal for that.

「Ngu! Not all of it, right!? You will sell us a bit, right!?」

When I tell that I'm unwilling to sell the Evil Viper skin, Luna-san goes into a panic.

「Is there something?」

「To tell the truth…… the Merchant Guild who caught the rumors are persistently contacting us」

Ah, so it's something like that. They probably heard from the Knights or the adventurers that were with us. They probably contacted the Adventurer's Guild immediately after that.

It seems they are eager for profit.

「It's large, after all. Of course, I won't be needing everything, I will properly sell」

「Really! Thank you very much!」

Rudolph-san said that Evil Viper's blood is precious. I retrieve the corpse from the《Infinite Storage》.

「Uwa~」 「… So big」 「Amazing!」

Seeing the Evil Viper's body, the entranced staff in the warehouse leak voices of amazement.

「Hey! Everyone, stop staring blanky and begin to work!」

The staff came to their senses after hearing Luna-san and start working on the Evil Viper.

Although Evil Viper's skin is very hard when it's alive, it's quite easier to handle once it died. That being said, it would still be impossible without special Mithril knives and good strength.

「Because the dismantling takes time, should we talk about the sale in the meantime? The dismantled materials will be held in the Guild's warehouse, will you come for it tomorrow?」 「I understand. Also, I would like to sell this too, please」

Red Wolf, Bloody Wolf, Giant Boar, Great Monkey. Also medicinal plants. It was not everything I have, but I take out what I thought would be good to sell from the《Infinite Storage》.

They are not all from the Gaya Forest, but they came from Aetherdia, so there shouldn't be a problem?

「Kya————!!!」

Luna-san who saw the goods I took out screams in joy.

Chapter 33
Craftsman Spirit

「I'm sorry, I lost it a bit…… Ah, right, right. Takumi-san, the Head of the Woodworking Department of the Craftsman Guild said that he wanted to see you」

Luna-san whose sanity has returned suddenly recalls something.

The Craftsmen Guild is as the name suggest a guild where craftsmen register, in other words, a commercial and industrial organization.

Woodworking Department——Craftsmen specializing in wood processing such as carpenters and furniture craftsmen.

Blacksmithing Department——Craftsmen specializing in a metal processing of weapons, armors, cooking utensils and such.

Cooking Department——Craftstmen specializing in food such as bakers and chefs.

Medical Department——Craftsmen specializing in medical treatment such as therapists and pharmacists.

—— And so on. There are much more various departments.

It's a place to regulate and share information, to arrange work and disciples, and to create connections between craftsmen.

「Craftsmen Guild wants to see me?」

「Yes. Takumi-san brought large trees from the Gaya Forest, right? I think they probably want to buy those from you……」

「……」

Luna-san…… You know even about the trees that I have knocked down and collected? Moreover, it's not only known to the Adventurer's Guild, but even the Craftsmen Guild knows of it?

Evil Viper, trees…… just how much information do you have…… Although it's not regulated, don't you know way too much? It has only been a day since then you know?

I left the adventurer guild and decided to head towards the craftsman guild while dropping my shoulders at the information leak.

◊ – ♦ – ◊

「I would like to meet the Head of the Woodworking Department, but」

「Do you have an appointment?」

When I inform the receptionist Oneesan of the Craftsmen Guild, she looks at me with a dubious expression.

If an unfamiliar person suddenly visits and wants to talk with the Department Head without an appointment, you might be suspicious, but this is too much in the face.

「No, I have received a message that the Department Head would like to see me」

「May I inquire about your name, please?」

「Ah, excuse me. It's Takumi Kayano」

「I'm sorry. I have heard the story. I will call the Department Head. Can you wait a moment?」

「Yes, I understand」

When I tell her my name, the receptionist's mood completely changed and she apologized.

It seems she was informed beforehand about my visit.

「Is that Takumi Kayano-dono!」

As soon as the receptionist left her seat, a large man appeared.

Zeezee, he gasps for breath, just how much were you hurrying!?

「Yes, that's right. eh… um, are you the Head of the Woodworking Department?」

「Ah! Excuse me. I'm the Head of the Woodworking Department Galion. It's too quick, but!! Gaya Forest's large tree! You have it, right!?」

「…… Yes」

It is about selling the large tree from the Gaya Forest after all. He's leaning forward, almost falling down. It was to the extent I unconsciously took a step back.

Trees from Gaya Forest seem to be excellent materials. Besides being able to make furniture without seams because it's so big, it contains magical power so it's possible to grant it fireproof magic.

Goods made from these trees are apparently all sold at high price.

But, as we know, Gaya Forest is a dangerous forest. Even when cutting down the trees around the forest, you don't know when a demon appears, so you must not be negligent and hire an escort. Besides, cutting down the trees is a challenge itself. Besides, carrying it back is an equal difficulty.

Therefore, it's not something craftsmen secure on their own, but it's something that the Craftsmen Guild desperately needs.

Yep, that's what the department Head-san told me in excitement.

I don’t care about it anymore. I won’t understand anymore technical talk!

Of course, I have no use of it, so I agreed to sell. After I had placed the trees in the storehouse, the department Head-san was going to begin to talk again, so I quickly received my money excused myself.

The enthusiasm was conveyed, but I am somewhat tired……

◊ – ♦ – ◊

「Hello」

After leaving the Craftsmen Guild, I visited the『Gold Wheat’s Shop』.

Ünexpectedly, long time no see? The last time I came was before conquering the dungeon.

「Ou, Takumi……」

「Are, you look somehow down? There are also no products even though it’s just past afternoon?」

Road-san’s complexion was bad at first glance. In addition, there were no products lined on the shelves. There should be many products lined up with customers lining up until the evening, but……

What happened?

「Road-san?」

「No…… you see……」

Road-san begins to speak in a small voice.

His story was like this——

This noble coerced him『Sell the Cream bread』by using his power.

Road-san didn't defy and made Cream bread with all ingredients he had left.

It seems to have ended at that time.

However, that noble told him to teach him the Cream bread's recipe next. Naturally, Road-san didn't respond to that.

A recipe is cook's treasure. It's not something that could be given out so easily.

Besides, I was the one who taught him the Cream bread recipe so it's not something he could teach others on his own.

Is he too loyal or what should I say…… Road-san is an extremely diligent craftsman. But, I have good feelings about Road-san because he's like that.

After declining him, the noble started making an uproar『They stole our secret recipe』this time. Furthermore, he pressured other stores not to sell the wheat flour which is always necessary for a bakery to『Gold Wheat's Shop』.

If there is no flour, he can't make bread.

——Because of that, he had no choice and suspended the business.

What a dirty thing to do!

「If you told the Cream bread recipe, the opponent would pull back, but telling him obediently would be unpleasant…… Road-san. I'd like to investigate for a bit, could you wait for a few days?」

「Of course, I have no objections. It would be annoying just to give up after resisting this much. Rather, sorry for taking your time」

「Please don't mind it. I'm not unrelated to this matter either」

Speaking of which, it's my fault for teaching Road-san.

Besides, I don't like people who use such dirty means. I feel like beating him up.

Un? It's okay, I won't beat him up physically. I can do it though if it's the present me. But, because the opponent is a noble, I would most likely become a criminal?

「Ah, right. I almost forgot. I would like a bit larger amount of bread made, would that be alright? I will be using the ingredients I have at me」

「Ah, I don't mind. I'm free anyway」

「Then, I would like this please」

I retrieve the necessary ingredients from the《Infinite Storage》, hand over the paper with number and types of bread to Road-san and left the store after saying I will come tomorrow again.

Now then, let's start with collecting information!

Chapter 34
Annoying Person

The name of the noble who is applying pressure on Road-san is a baron from Guardia called Gilbert.

The mastermind unexpectedly became apparent. I went to the store where Road-san usually buys ingredients, and when I asked the shop assistant, he answered me. Plainly.

The person in the shop didn't want to do it, but『I couldn't go against a noble. I'm really sorry to Road-san』he said.

◊ – ♦ – ◊

「Oi! Those kids!!」

I was loitering around the shopping street and thinking "What to do?" about Baron Gilbert. All of sudden, a man shouts from behind me.

Allen and Elena got startled and hid behind me.

「Do you need something from the children?」

「Those fellows are my goods!」

「……」

…… What is this guy in the middle of the road talking?

When I appraised him, his occupation is Slave Trader. Slaves may be goods for a slave trader, but does he walk down the street and point at people making them his goods? How rude!

From his behavior, he must be the slave trader who was attacked near the Gaya Forest. He's the one who must have ran away while using Allen and Elena as a decoy.

Though I heard they were half destroyed, this fellow was all right. What a lucky guy!

Rather, he still was in this town…… no, is it different? Has he been attacked on the way to his base?

Well, where this guy's base is at, is unrelated to me, though.

「These children are my younger siblings. Could you please stop saying such rude things?」

「There's no way I would mistake such distinctive kids! I will have you return them to me」

They are not slaves, they have names which are Allen and Elena, and in the first place, speaking about "returning" them is funny.

Even if what the slave trader says is true, it's also true that he "threw them away" while using as a decoy. He has no right to claim himself as their owner. It's only a false charge.

「Could you stop joking around?」

「Shut up! Hand them over at once!!」

「……」

I want to smash him up immediately.

But, if I do that here, he would definitely make an even bigger fuss of it.

I desperately suppress my impulse because I understand that it's a bad move.

「Oi, what is this fuss!」

The town patrol seems to have noticed the uproar.

The curious spectators have gathered around us.

「Just at the right time. It's a thief! This fellow has stolen my goods! Please arrest him!!」

The guards alternate their gazes between the slave trader and me.

「…… Is that the truth?」

「No, I did not do such thing」

Since the patrolling guard asked, I flatly denied it.

But you see~, a person who stole something wouldn't usually obediently confess『I stole it』, wouldn't he? Did you make a mistake in the confirmation method?

Well, if I was arrested without being asked first, it would be a poor mistaken arrest.

「Have you heard what goods that person said I stole from him? And by looking at this situation, do you really think it's true?」

「…… What are the stolen goods?」

「These children!!」

「「……」」

The curious onlookers look with disgust at the uselessly screaming slave trader. Allen and Elena clung to me, hiding even further.

The patrolling guards look at the frightened children hiding behind me and then look with dubious gazes at the slave trader. From the 3rd person view, it must seem like the slave trader has picked a fight with me. Actually, that's true.

「Where's the proof? Please show the proof that these children are your shop's slaves. I will say it before hand, but these children don't have a slave crest, you know?」

A crest is engraved on the bodies of slaves with Contract Magic which makes the slaves not being able to defy their master. If it's not there, it means that Allen and Elena are not slaves.

Children who escaped on their own would have a crest carved on their bodies.

It costs money to apply Contract Magic. It's this fellow's fault for being a miser.

◊ – ♦ – ◊

"The slave trade", the trade of people is authorized in this country. And there are two kinds of slaves. Crime slaves and Debt slaves.

Crime slaves, as the name suggests are people who committed a crime. They are forcibly sent to mines where they have to do manual labor while strictly monitored.

The other one, Debt slaves are people who couldn't return borrowed money and those who sold themselves. If they can pay off their principal, they will be released.

They are used as a work force, but their human rights are guaranteed. Therefore, there's an obligation to provide meals and minimum necessities of life.

But, owners who treat them like products, not following the responsibility to protect them, and make them do criminal acts are never ceasing. This trader is one of those.

The patrolling guards and the curious onlookers realize that and look at the slave trader with cold eyes.

「If it's the shop assistant of my shop, he can provide the proof!」

「If you tell that to your shop assistant, it will become an order. It won't be a proof」

It's easy making things convenient for yourself.

Rather, this must be a daily routine for this fellow.

「Even if it's truth that these children resemble the children from your shop, it's not restricted only to these children, right? You are a criminal who kidnaps children. Weren't the children slaves in your shop actually kidnapped?」

The patrols and the onlookers hold their breath at my words. I hear『Surely not』from here and there.

With the interaction so far, it has become "It wouldn't be strange if true".

「Let us hear more detailed story back at the station」

「What have you said!?」

The patrol restricts the slave trader and drags him off.

「I would like to hear your side of the story too, but……」

「I don't want to go to the same place as the trader. The children are frightened」

I didn't feel the obligation to go to the station with the guards, so I refused. The patrol guard seemed to understand and didn't force me to go.

But, I told him my name in case something comes up.

The patrol leaves, the onlookers scatter, I hold Allen and Elena in my arms and immediately leave the place.

「「Onii~chan……」」

「Everything's all right. I will be with you as long as Allen and Elena want to stay by my side」

「「Un……」」

When I reassure Allen and Elena who are full of anxiety, they cling in my arms even stronger.

◊ – ♦ – ◊

After gathering information again, I have learned more things.

I have heard from the curious onlookers I have asked『With the noble backing him up, he does as he pleases』or『Recently influential』, although on the level of rumors, the people at the shopping street knew quite a bit.

That slave trader——his Gist Company is supported by Baron Gilbert behind the scenes. The very same person who pressured the『Gold Wheat's Shop』.

Again!? I almost tsukkomi'd in a loud voice.

Baron Gilbert apparently came to this town in order to purchase slaves.

Moreover, aren't they talking about "children twins"?

Baron Gilbert apparently came to this town thinking he would be able to obtain them and then flew into a rage when he didn't found them at the store. I heard that from the people who passed by the store.

That’s why the fuss from a while ago.

Because the children that he used to save himself suddenly appeared in front of him, he was going to obtain them whatever it takes.

It seems that those fellows are opponents who I have to crush with all my strength.

Chapter 35
Power Against Power

「Alen, Elena. Good morning」

「「……」」

Since yesterday, Allen and Elena would never move away from me.

And when I told them good morning today, the two looked at me with dispirited expressions without speaking. They have reverted to their original state they were in when I found them.

That slave trader really did it now!! I will absolutely not let him off!!

I have to prepare one ticket to hell for him……. fufufu…

◊ – ♦ – ◊

First, I visit the Adventurer's Guild and finish our business.

I secure several tens meters of Evil Viper's skin and 100kg of its meat and sell the rest to the guild.

When the material such as Bloody Wolves was added, it was a significant sum of money. Even a Platinum coin was mixed in.

I kept half of the money on me and deposited the rest in the guild's deposit.

Next stop is the Knights branch.

A messenger from the Knight's came to the Inn yesterday evening telling me to visit the Knights next day. It seems to be about Sajesh.

This is convenient, so I went.

「———And that's it」

First, Risner-sama reports about the matter.

Sajesh has been punished by two weeks of house arrest and three months of being demoted to an apprentice.

It's much stricter punishment than I thought. Although it's only three months, it will be probably hard to work as an apprentice.

「That's all from us. So, Takumi, what's wrong?」

Because I conveyed to the messenger yesterday that I would like to consult with Wald-sama about something, he asks me immediately after the report is finished.

「Actually……——」

First, I spoke about the problem with the slave trader.

As Allen and Elena are orphans, Wald-sama has guaranteed me last time that I'm their guardian. Therefore, it would be better to get the troubles out of my chest beforehand, right?

I mean, although the slave trader was taken to the station yesterday, there will definitely not be enough evidence. I don't think he will give up on the children that easily. He will definitely show up again.

And then, I explain what happened with『Gold's Wheat Shop』and Baron Gilbert.

I ask them about what to do since the opponent is a noble. Well, in this area, I don't rely on Wald-sama, but Risner-sama instead.

Would it be possible to cooperate? I had such plan.

Well, my intentions to let someone else take care of them.

I mean, this is a case where I have to smash someone up without directly touching them, right? If it would be directly, Allen and Elena would definitely come into contact with those fellows.

I don't want them to be affected by those fellows anymore. While that may be true, I have no intentions of leaving the twins.

There is no value in leaving the children behind in order to interfere with those fellows.

Therefore———take care of them!

Those fellows! Are definitely! Committing crimes.

Therefore, let's crush them with a frontal attack!

「I see… if it's about that, there's a more suitable person for that than us. Let's head over there」

Risner-sama who heard the story urges us to move.

「Excuse me」

「Oh? Isaac, huh. What's the matter? … N? This is?」

「He's Takumi Kayano-san」

「Oo! You are! I see, I see, I'm glad you came. Please sit down」

We leave Wald-sama's room, and Risner-sama guides me to a room with a friendly man in his thirties and another man also in his thirties who hadn't spoken yet.

「Takumi-san. This is the Commander and Commander's advisor」

「…… I am glad to meet you. I'm Takumi Kayano……」

「Commander is son of Lauren House the feudal lord governing this territoy」

「Derrick Lauren. There are several people of Lauren house in this town, so Derrick is alright」

The destination was the office of the commander of the Knights of Shirin.

The friendly man is Derrick Lauren. He's the most important person of the Knights of Shirin and the Lauren House's second son. Because his older brother was assigned to manage the territory, Derrick-sama became a Knight.

The second man is Philip Callan-sama. Commander's advisor. Not a vice-commander, but he seems to be in charge of administrative work.

Risner-sama has brought me to an incredible place, huh…… tell me beforehand, please.

After the short introductions, I explained my business to the two.

「Fumu, I see. Alright, we will investigate!」

「Eh?」

Derrick-sama takes it in quickly.

It was too unexpected I let out a weird noise.

「Although I have asked you for help, is it alright for you to agree that easily?」

「You took care of my subordinates. Besides……」

When Derrick-sama glances at Callan-sama, Callan-sama clears his throat and starts explaining.

「Information about Baron Gilbert has been reported to the Knights before. He apparently does what he pleases, and reports are coming from here and there, the problems don't run out」

「There are rumors about that house behaving strangely lately」

「Yes. No special goods are coming from Baron Gilbert which should be covered by taxation, yet he's lavishly buying various luxurious products. Hearing Takumi-dono's story, his relation with the slave trader is suspicious」

「A lot of dust is likely to come out when you hit it, huh……」

「Yes. And in large quantities at that……」

Apparently, there are a lot of things Baron Gilbert is guilty of that I don't know yet.

Nevertheless, Risner-sama and Callan-sama…… they are in a perfect sync…… and their smiles are scary!

「That's why we are already in the middle of an investigation. We also direct people towards Gilbert's territory. Since this is an opportunity, let's us handle your matter too. If we let him do as he pleases in our territory, our reputation will be affected too!」

Ah, un. Derrick-sama also looks quite angry.

Well, I don't mind leaving it to you so please take care of it.

「Apart from that, about the『Gold Wheat's Shop』! It's the store where the new bread started, right? That bread is good! It's just right to eat when the stomach is empty」

「That's right. The "Phantom Bread" was especially delicious」

「What!? Isaac, you have eaten the "Phantom Bread"!?」

「Yes」

「Ku~ How! How did you obtain it!! It's something sold out on days without set dates in few minutes! It's impossible for someone like us the Knights with duty system to obtain it!!」

A person captivated by the sweet bread is also in here. Risner-sama looks proud to have eaten the Cream Bread……

Although not seemingly interested, Callan-sama also glances between Risner-sama and me. Is he perhaps concerned about the acquisition route of the Cream Bread?

「The reason why Takumi-dono is being concerned about『Gold Wheat's Shop』affair should convey the only possibility」

「I see! They were given by Takumi!」

「Yes, Takumi-san is the inventor of the Cream Bread」

「What!? Is that true?」

「Hoo~」

「Y, yes…」

Scary!!

Derrick-sama's and Callan-sama's eyes look at me as beasts stalking their prey……

「Regarding the “Phantom Bread” although it’s possible to manage somehow, something similar may happen with person in power again, so Takumi-san seems to be troubled」

「Yosh! Lauren House will back you up!」

Back up? Lauren House?

What Risner-sama said is not wrong by any means.

Even if we tidy up this matter and reopen, I think that something similar may happen again. If we have a noble’s support, something like that will not occur ever again.

But, I’m not satisfied when things advance so smoothly……

「If you back us up, the “Phantom Bread”… Cream Bread, was it? You will make it for me, right?」

Uee!? The aim was the Cream Bread!?

Is he perhaps wanting to support us because of that!?

「What are you talking about? Something hard to obtain will become easy to obtain, you know?」

「That’s right. You should do whatever it takes to make hard to obtain things easy to obtain, you know?」

「…… Is that so? Well, if you won’t say to make it when there are no ingredients at hand, that condition seems all right」

For things, you really want『Pay whatever the price』, is it something like that? It’s backing this time, though……

「Yosh, then, let's go now」

「Go? To the『Gold Wheat's Shop』?」

「Naturally! Now that I will back you up I have to meet the shopkeeper!」

「That's what you are saying, but in fact, you really just want to eat the Cream Bread, right?」

When Callan-sama points out, Derrick-sama's shoulder twitch. It seems he was right.

「Commander, you won't be able to eat the Cream Bread at the moment」

「What!?」

「That's only given. It takes time to make bread」

Callan-sama has a reasonable opinion, but……

「Ah～…… you may be able to… eat it?」

「Oh?」

I have asked Road-san to make a lot of bread yesterday, after all. Of course, I requested him to make some Cream Bread.

I think it should have been done soon～ Surely.

Chapter 36
Swimmingly

I have accompanied Derrick-sama and Risner-sama to the『Gold Wheat's Shop』.

Callan-sama stayed back to gather information. Nothing was said to Wald-sama. Riser-sama said『If he gets to know, he will definitely escape from work to tag along』…… Ah, right.

When we entered the shopping street, Allen and Elena added strength to the hands they were holding me with.

The two watched their surroundings with vigilance. It's not often that the two who can detect presences unconsciously "look for something" with their own eyes.

There are no "fear" or "hate" emotions on their faces, but that thing from yesterday probably stirred things that are deeply rooted in the innermost depths of their hearts.

I must urgently think of something to divert them from thinking about this……

◊ – ♦ – ◊

When we enter the『Gold Wheat's Shop』the bread has just finished baking as Road-san was just taking it out of the oven.

Un, smells nice~

「Road-san, excuse me for the intrusion」

「Ou Takumi, you have co… me…… eeh!?」

Road-san notices the Knights who have entered behind me and he got so surprised he almost dropped the bread. Then『If you are about to bring big shots, inform me beforehand!』he said.

Ah, yes, I'm sorry. I also thought similarly just a while ago. However, they suddenly wanted to come to the store, so I didn't have a choice～

「This is the Knight Commander Derrick-sama. He's the son of the Lauren House」

「W, what!? La, Lauren house!! F, feudal lord's son!!?」

First, I introduce Derrick-sama and Risner-sama to Road-san. Then, knowing Derrick-sama's identity, Road-san was very nervous around the feudal lord's son.

I see, this is the normal reaction……

Somehow, I'm ignorant of social status in Aetherdia. I was originally brought up on Earth where social positions are not so different, but the knowledge about this world implemented in me was with Syl's specifications, so it makes me lump all "people" together.

Therefore, even when talking to a noble, I don't feel much obligated.

Well, I think there won't be any problems if I speak politely, but…… how it really is? There weren't any problems until now so it's all right I think?

「Road-san, is the Cream Bread baked yet?」

「O, ou. It's done……」

「Hou. So this is the Cream Bread～」

「Derrick-sama, please have some」

「Ou, sorry about that. Lemme see……———」

When the finished Cream Bread is finished, Derrick-sama receives it and immediately bites in.

When I asked Risner-sama if he also wants to eat,『Of course, I will have some too』he answered.

「Oo, delicious!!」

Derrick-sama seemed to like the Cream Bread very much and ate it all.

「By the way, what is that? I have not seen this in any store before」

「This is something new Takumi told me to make……」

「What!? New product!」

Derrick-sama quickly finds a new product and stared at it fixedly.

The person who made it, Road-san, probably haven't even sampled it yet. He seemed very interested but kept his attitude firm in front of Derrick-sama and Risner-sama.

Risner-sama wasn't staring as Derricks-sama, but he also looked interested.

Actually, I found a red bean that is similar to the adzuki bean[1]. After immersing that red bean in water overnight, I boiled it in a nectar liquid… gum syrup? No, I boiled it in an even thinner watery sap of trees with sugar and created a red bean paste.

The nectar liquid is even easier to obtain than sugar, I thought Road-san could use that instead, and it turned out well.

I handed the red bean paste to Raod-san and asked him to wrap it just like the Cream Bread and bake it.

It turned out delicious if I say myself. The sweetness is perfect.

After that, we also made bread containing Cyan fruit and bright yellow walnuts called Kuru nuts with millet bread as a base.

「This one is Anpan[2]. The another one is a millet bread with Cyan fruit and Kuru nuts mixed in」

They have just eaten the Cream bread, but Derrick-sama and Risner-sama immediately ate the new products.

Un. These also received a favorable review.

When I handed half of the Anpan each to Allen and Elena, they ate it deliciously.

There are relatively many people who don't like red bean paste, but these members seem not to have that problem.

Incidentally, I like both Tsubuan[3] and Koshian[4]. I didn't make it this time, but I should definitely try making it later.

「Iya~ That was delicious」

The satisfied Derrick-sama asked Road-san 2-3 questions.

And then, because Derrick-sama hasn't fault any problem with Road-san's personality, he talked about the backing of『Gold Wheat's Shop』.

Road-san who was bowing『Much grateful』suddenly looked at me and started complaining.

Eh, what, what? You didn't hear anything about this?

Iya I mean~ this is something that was suddenly decided on. Look~ This thing is good at manipulating noble-samas.

It's not my fault.

「Well then, we shall return and promptly move to smash that conceited fool~」

This person seriously came just to eat the Cream bread……

Derrick-sama went back satisfied, parting after saying he will send a messenger from Lauren House later to formally arrange things.

Just in case, I give Risner-sama presents to hand them to Callan-sama who looked so envious and Wald-sama who is doing his best at working in the branch.

「Oi, Takumi!!」

「It's a course of events. I also didn't think it would end up like this」

Road-san approached me after Derrick-sama and Risner-sama left.

Ah~ I didn't tell Road-san that Derrick-sama is backing us up because of the Cream bread. Is he perhaps worried about collateral?

I should explain that properly.

◊ – ♦ – ◊

I was fully concerned about Allen and Elena after throwing all the difficult things aside. I hug them close more than necessary and pat their heads. I'm affectionate to them to their heart's content.

As a result, Allen's and Elena's condition almost returned back. Almost as they were before meeting the slave trader.

「「Yummy~」」

「Is that so? I'm glad~」

The thing the two are eating now is a fruit jelly.

Of course, I made it.

The ingredient is this.

【Slime Jelly】
Slime remains. Squishy object.
Not harmful to the human body, but has no benefits either.
Vulnerable to heat, melts when warmed up.

It's a drop item from the slimes we defeated in the Dungeon of Earth.

There's a lot, I should make something out of this~ I thought.

It's called "jelly" and it's not harmful to the human body so let's make jelly. I tried making it with such simple thinking.

I heated fruit juice in the pot, melted the slime jelly inside, then I poured it into glasses where it splendidly solidified. The slime jelly played the role of a gelatin wonderfully.

The ratio of two liters of liquid to 1 slime jelly, had a good feeling.

The texture is much more squishy than that of a traditional jelly, but that's also good!

I tried making it only with fruit juice at first, but I tried making it with various fruit compotes after that. Starting with Ranka fruit's juice, Riigo fruit's juice, milk, black tea…… I made it with everything I could think of.

I was so absorbed in the making, that I unnoticeably amassed a mountain of jelly. Ah~… it's not like it will go bad, there's no problem since it will become Allen's and Elena's snack from now on, right?

◊ – ♦ – ◊

After several days of doing that, all the problems in question were put in order.

Iya~ it was quicker than I expected~

An investigation on the Gist Company under the Callan-sama has started, but well~ that slave trader was mistreating his slaves, and his business was suspended right after getting exposed. Then, the house search by the Knights was performed.

It came out, it came out! A Large amount of evidence on backroom deals has been found.

There was also an account book for transactions with Baron Gilbert.

Baron Gilbert apparently used Gist Company for human trafficking. There apparently were many people in the company's underground cells that weren't slaves.

That being the case, a shred of evidence against Baron Gilbert was found, and investigations on the House of Baron Gilbert have begun.

The baron seems to have done other backroom deals than human trafficking like camouflaging of branded goods, etc. It appears that documents about the products and contracts were kept carefully in a secret warehouse in the Baron's basement.

Baron Gilbert seemingly hid his crimes well, but his connections to the Gist Company became apparent. Following on the Gist Company, they were able to pull Baron Gilbert skillfully in and I was invited to the Commander Derrick's office where I received words of gratitude.

The Gist Company's slave trader was sent to the mines and Baron Gilbert was sent together with the evidence to the Royal Capital.

Although I expected this, Baron Gilbert will certainly be punished by imprisonment and deprivation of his rank. He apparently may even receive the capital punishment. Furthermore, it seems his family members supported him, so they will be made into crime slaves.

They really are getting what they deserve!

I felt refreshed, and the daily peaceful life returned.

Footnotes

1. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adzuki_bean
2. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anpan
3. Tsubuan (粒餡), whole red beans boiled with sugar but otherwise untreated
4. Koshian (漉し餡), beans passed through a sieve to remove bean skins; the most common type

Chapter 37
Departure

「With this, we can go on a journey without any worries」

「What!?」 「Haa!?」 「N?」 「Oh?」

In order, Derrick-sama, Wald-sama, Callan-sama, and Risner-sama.

All of them let out silly voices because of my announcement.

Are? Did I not tell them before?

「Takumi, are you leaving Shirin?」

「Yes. I actually wanted to leave earlier, but I was concerned about the matter with Baron Gilbert」

At least, I wanted to resolve the matter with『Gold Wheat's Shop』before going on a journey.

I think that if the problem were only the slave trader, I would quickly leave the town. It would look like running away, but dealing with fellows like that is troublesome.

I think it was good that all the problems got settled as a result.

「Have you decided on your destination?」

「I thought about going south towards the sea」

「I see… so you are staying in the country…」

When I said that I'm『Going south』, the four people made expressions of relief.

Is that it? Do they want to keep human resources in the country?

In a case of emergency, the magnitude of the damage will change depending on the available fighting power. It must be something that Knights must consider at all times.

「The south, is it? Which means, Bailey?」

「Yes, that's right」

The destination has been pretty much decided on the port Bailey on the Southwest of Guardia.

The season is already a complete summer. It's all about sea when it comes to summer, right?

I thought about showing the sea to Allen and Elena.

Ordinary people would travel from town to town, and it would take at least a month by carriage to arrive. If that would be the case, summer would already be at its final stage, so I intend to ride Joule and others, that way we can expect to arrive in a few days.

Because of that, there's no need to hesitate.

「Takumi-san, here」

「A letter? Risner-sama, this is?」

Risner-sama hands me a single letter.

Hearing our destination, Risner-sama borrowed tools from Callan-sama and wrote it on the spot.

「It's a letter of introduction to the feudal lord of Bailey」

「Eh!?」

To think it was for the feudal lord-sama!?

I inadvertently retracted the hand I was about to receive the letter with.

「Bailey's feudal lord is my acquaintance. I will contact him so definitely visit him when you arrive in Bailey. I don't mind if you force him to support bakery, etc.」

「Eeh!?」

Not "rely on" but "I don't mind if you force him"…… What are you saying! As expected, something like that is not possible.

Risner-sama continues to present me the letter while grinning.

Ah~ the well-prepared smile…… it's not something I can go against~

I look around asking for help, but as expected no one wants to help me. If I had to say they have a "receive it" feeling.

I decided to accept it gratefully.

Even so, I have no intention of forcing my troubles on him. Let's rely on him only when in a difficult situation.

I may ask him to support the bakery, though……

After finishing my business with the Knights, I visited the Adventurer's Guild, Road-san, and the Inn to say goodbye.

When I said we are leaving, everyone was surprised. We were detained at the Adventurer's Guild.

Luna-san particularly had a very sorrowful look on her face, she looked like she would start clinging to me at any moment.

It must be because I'm an important supplier of material from Gaya Forest. I feel slightly empty inside that there was no love element involved……

◊ – ♦ – ◊

The next morning was an ideal day for the departure.

We departed from Shirin and soon walked off the highway. After confirming that there are no people around, I summoned my Contracted beasts.

『Waffu』 『Gau』 『Pii』

The three immediately nestle close to me.

「O~ Yoshyosh」

I could hardly summon the Contracted beasts before. They may be sulky that it took so long to call them.

First of all, I decided to pat them to their heart's content.

After the three animals had been satisfied to a certain degree, I conveyed the calling matter.

「Joule and Feat will transport us」

『Waffu』 『Gau』

「Bolt will fly in the sky and keep track of human presences」

『Pii』

As the three replied in acknowledgment, I promptly seated Allen and Elena on Joule and climbed on Feat's back myself.

I told Joule and Feat to start running along Gaya Forest.

Just in case, I had Bolt to fly up and watch from above.

Like that, it's less probable to meet people. I can't help but think that meeting with people would be troublesome.

I imagine riding on S-Rank monsters would make a ruckus. Therefore, just in case.

Sometimes, a monster emerges from within Gaya Forest. Then, Joule and Feat would lower us down and go to defeat it.

Iya~ Our kids are strong. They defeat most of the opponents in a single blow. As expected of S-Rank monsters. How reliable.

Moreover, they return bringing the defeated monsters in their mouths, how considerable.

「「Good child~」」

Allen and Elena praise Joule and Feat who returned from the hunt. Good child, good child, they pat their heads.

Even if Allen and Elena stand on their tiptoes, they are not able to reach Joule's and Feat's heads. Because of that, Joule and Feat lower their heads to make it easier.

It's little clumsy, but a heartwarming scene.

『Waffu』『Gau』

「Haa~! Wait a moment!!」

After having their heads patted, this time Joule and Feat tried to lick Allen's and Elena's faces back, so I stop them in panic.

「Joule, Feat, don't lick!! Haven't you just bite on the Bloody Bear!? Your mouths are bloody!!」

『Waffu!?』『Gau!?』

Joule and Feat stiffen with a twitch.

What!? …… they look at me with such expression.

You are really easy to understand, but I can't help but think you are not beasts……

「Look, I will make you neatly clean so don't move.《Washing》」

『Waffu!』『Gau!』

「「Ukya~」」

The moment Joule and Feat became clean they started licking Allen's and Elena's faces.

Ah, they pushed Allen and Elena down……

O~i. Be careful not to squash them~

Seeing such situation, Bolt cries『Pii』on top of my shoulder. For some reason, it felt like he was saying… good grief.

Because Allen and Elena are having fun I didn't stop them, just moved closer in case Joule and Feat will start crushing them.

「「Unya~」」

『Waffu~』『Gau~』

「Uo!」

While playing with each other, the two children and two animals suddenly charged at me.

It's okay if it's just Allen and Elena, but as expected I won't be able to catch two big animals. In short, I have been pushed down.

Ah, Bolt has evacuated……

The two children and two animals looked with a joyful expression of success.

「You~」

First, I tickle Allen and Elena who fell on me with all my might.

After that, I got up and rubbed Joule's and Feat's cheeks.

「「Ukya~」」

『Waffuu~』『Gauu~』

Oya? You are happy?

I intended to do that as punishment, but it looks like I was unsuccessful.

But oh~ well.

In the end, we played until all of us were satisfied.

Chapter 38
To the Sea

Because we are not traveling in a hurry, I have decided to go in the Gaya Forest to exercise.

Unlike the last time hunting where Joule and Feat used their claws and fangs, they use magic to kill monsters.

Joule covers the dead bodies around with ice magic《Freeze》into one large lump of ice. Feat uses the wind magic《Float》to make the lump of ice fly and brings it to my side.

Skillful. And clever…… they are learning properly.

When they were fighting at close range, I had no choice but to clean them with my《Washing》.

Well, it's alright, though. It's not magic that consumes much of magical power.

…… It's just, those fellows won't get satisfied unless they can lick after each battle…… Well, it makes Allen and Elena happy so…… oh well?

We loiter around the forest and hunt.

Then, before I notice, the children and the Contracted beasts compete at monster hunting.

When a monster is found, all members charge, defeat the monster, bring it to me, get patted by me.

That is the course of events.

Once in a while, Bolt would《Thunderbolt》a monster from the sky the moment he finds it. When that happens, the two children and the other two animals look really vexed.

「Uwa!!」

When they are feeling down because they couldn't get praised, I pat them with the intention of consoling, and they jump into action again.

You guys, calm down a bit~

◊ – ♦ – ◊

As the area became dark, I have decided to leave Gaya Forest for the camp.

Riding on Joule and Feat, we can get out quickly, and the outside of Gaya Forest is safe.

When the camping site is decided, we have the dinner next.

「Allen, Elena. What would you like to eat?」

「「N…… Cream!」」

Because both Allen and Elena love Cream bread, it frequently ends up as their snack of choice.

But, making Cream bread as a dinner menu is a bit…… I would like them to choose something more nutritious.

「N~ Allen, Elena. Cream bread is not good for a dinner…… How about having it tomorrow as breakfast snack?」

「「Ye~s」」

「Let's see…… How about Oyakodon[1]? The one with an egg on rice」

「「Will eat~」」

「It's decided then」

Although it felt like I have incited them, because the two obediently accepted the compromise plan, Oyakodon has been chosen for the dinner.

「Joule, Feat, and Bolt want meat, right? Raw?」

『Waffu~u』

「N? No? Grilled is better?」

『Waffuwaffu』

「I see. Joule wants it grilled. Does Feat also prefer it grilled?」

『Gaun』

「What about Bolt?」

『Piiii』

The Contracted beast fundamentally don't require feeding. Apparently, when Contracted beasts are supplemented with magical power while in their master's shadow which restores their energy.

However, because they can eat, they are having a meal together with us like this.

Because of that, I have asked them what they want to eat, but it seems my Contracted beasts like grilled meat better than raw……

Raw meat? They shook their heads when I asked.

Grilled meat tastes better. Looks like they have the same opinion as people.

These children seem to enjoy "food" with a strong taste more.

Grilled meat or Oyakodon, which is better? When asked, all three choose the latter. It seems the same menu as ours is better.

Even if I were going to make just one serving, it wouldn't be much trouble to make more. Therefore, I have decided to make Oyakodon for six.

Aren't spring onions bad for felines? Is what I thought, but since there seems to be no problem, I cook the onions and guineafowl with soy sauce and finish it up with half boiled egg.

「Well then, itadakimasu」

「「Itadakima~shu」」『Waffu』『Gau』『Pii』

Un, delicious!

I must say that finishing Oyakodon with a half boiled egg dripping on top of it is delicious.

Allen and Elena also eat while stuffing their mouths with spoons with utmost effort.

I have served the food for Joule and others on a plate to make it easier for them to eat, but Bolt is dexterously using his beak while Joule and Feat stuff their mouths around the plate in their small forms.

Apparently, they can enjoy the taste more while in their small forms.

Well, if they eat in their adult forms, they would eat it in two or three bites after all.

◊ – ♦ – ◊

「「Joule」」

『Waffu』

When it was time to sleep, Joule's stomach became a substitute of the cushion for the three of us. Joule's fur is soft and comfy……

Today is Joule's turn, but because it has been decided that the cushion role will alternate, it's Feat's turn tomorrow.

I thought it was bad to treat them as cushions at first, but rather it was the other way around.

Joule's tail was intensively hitting the ground as if saying quickly over here.

Because it doesn't look like I have to hold back, I lean against Joule while asking Feat and Bolt to stand guard.

That being said, Feat and Bolt are in a resting postures next to us. Every single of my children is sensitive to presences after all. There won't be any problems.

Ah, the moons…

Aetherdia has three moons. Yellow, blue, and red. Three colored moons rise into the sky.

Which reminds me, this is my first time camping in a place where the sky is clearly visible. Sky can't be seen from within Gaya Forest, then there was the dungeon.

A night sky after a long time.

Gazing at several moons, I realize again that this is a different world.

Has it been a little over a month since I came to Aetherdia?

So many things happened so fast… I fall asleep while thinking such.

◊ – ♦ – ◊

I have decided to go to Gaya Forest the next day too.

Allen, Elena, Joule, and others apparently haven't played sufficiently yet.

We are gathering medicinal plants today.

「There~」

「Many~」

「There really are many……」

Ah~ Demon Spirit Grass.

Maryoku Grass is relatively common, but Demon Spirit Grass should have been a valuable medicinal plant……

Because Gaya Forest itself is a place full of magic, does it grow densely here?

And to find a place where they grow en masse at that……

『Waffu』

This time, Joule seem to have found something.

It's a Soul Grass…… quite a rare medicinal plant again…… I'm sure it's used as nostrum.

『Gau』

The next one is Feat, huh. This is Touka Grass.

Because it's leaves are transparent, it's quite difficult to find plant……

Nose? Did Feat find it by smell?

『Pii』

Ah, Bolt has found Minsu fruit.

Minsu in fact is a plum-like fruit. It's bigger than typical plum, it's very sour, but it's nutritional value is high, it's used for medicinal tonics as it has nourishing properties.

There seem to be quite a lot on the tree. Bolt drops it with his beak, and I catch it when it falls.

Nevertheless, aren't we finding quite a lot rare things in high demands?

「「Ah!」」

Allen and Elena seem to have found something again as they run towards a tree.

Now then, what did they find this time?

◊ – ♦ – ◊

Moving while sufficiently playing along the way, we finally saw a sea a week later after leaving Shirin.

It can be said we moved at quite a high pace to arrive in just a week.

「Allen, Elena, that is the sea」

「「Sea~ Big~」」

Allen and Elena gaze at the sea with sparkling eyes.

「「Water, a lot~」」

「That's right. All of that is a salty water」

「「Delish~?」」

「It's not tasty? You shouldn't drink it」

「「Ye~s」」

I had to say it because they would drink the water as soon as arriving at the beach. Like this, they won't probably drink it.

We immediately stepped onto the beach.

The beach without any man-made objects is quiet with the only roaring of the waves resounding.

While Allen and Elena are playing at the water's edge———

「That… may I ask if you are Takumi-sama?」

「…… You are?」

Suddenly, I was spoken to by a woman who emerged from the sea.

Umm… why do you know my name?

「I'm Mirena of the mermaid tribe」

Haa!? Say what!?

Chapter 39
Mermaid

「…… You are?」

「I'm Mirena of the mermaid tribe」

「……!」

Seriously!? A mermaid she says!!

When I appraise her in a rush———

Status
【Name】Mirena
【Race】Mermaid
【Occupation】
【Age】26
【Level】17
【Skills】
Spearmanship | Water Magic
Dismantling | Night Vision | Detection
Swimming | Cultivation
Cooking | Singing
Mental Status Resistance
【Titles】

Uwaa~ it's true. Her race is Mermaid.

This woman is without a doubt a mermaid. Only her upper body is visible, so I can only see an ordinary human woman.

As expected, diving under the sea to confirm would be rude, but does this woman has a tailfin as expected?

It's a mermaid! I want to confirm right away, but patience. Patience……

「Why do you know about me?」

「I was informed about you by Water God's retainer-sama」

Haa? From Water God's retainer-sama?

First, I confirmed how does the mermaid woman know about me, but an unexpected answer has come back.

…… Just what is going on?

「Come again, the Water God's retainer-sama has……」

「I have been advised that you would be able to solve a problem we are facing. Takumi-sama, could I request your assistance, please? 」

What's with that…… just what did the Water God's retainer-sama say to these people?

In addition to that, Mirena-sam must have been informed beforehand that we will come here.

「Umm…… an assistance you say……」

「For the details, we have to go to our village. Could we move there first?」

Mirena-san asks while deeply bowing her head.

If you ask me like that, there's no way I could reject, but……

「No, no, wait a moment. Your village is definitely under the sea, right? Even if we can swim, we won't be able to go there」

Because we won't be able to breathe.

Rather, in the first place, can I swim? In the past…… of course, I could swim!

Well, I know the method of swimming itself so if it's the present body I feel like I could do it. My motor nerves have exceptionally improved after all.

Regarding Allen and Elena, I think that they would immediately master swimming if shown. We are talking about those two after all……

But, even if they were able to swim, as expected it would not be possible for them to breathe underwater. No…… I have a feeling that they would be able to stay underwater for quite a lot of time because of an outrageous lung capacity……

But even that would not allow us to stay underwater for a longer period of time.

「I am prepared in regard of that」

「……?」

「…… Please wait for a moment」

When I was lost in my thoughts, Mirena-san takes something out and presents it to me.

U~n…… what's that?

Silver… I wonder? I can see a looped string-like thing sitting in Mirena-san's palm, but…… I don't know what that is.

Because we are at the water's edge and Mirena-san in the sea, there's a subtle distance between us.

When I tilt my head, Mirena-san lets the thing in her hand float on the sea's surface. It gets jolted by the waves and slowly drifts to us little by little.

It didn't feel like the waves were natural, was it manipulated by Water magic?

When I pick up the floating thing, it was a bracelet. With an engraved thin curious pattern. It feels hard on touch, but it's not a mineral? What is it?

I thought it was silver, but it looks iridescent because of the reflections. A mysterious color.

I couldn't figure anything out just by looking so I appraise it straight away.

【Mermaid Bracelet】
A bracelet made with the scales of a mermaid.
A magic tool that allows breathing under water.
In addition, it wraps entire body in a thin film, preventing clothes from getting wet.

Oo, a fantastic magic tool has appeared.

Certainly, with something like this, there won't be any problems with breathing.

I had a feeling it's not made from minerals like iron or gold, but the material were actually scales of a mermaid! Indeed, I didn't expect that.

The mysterious color is related to mermaid scales. It's convincing then.

「We will certainly be all right with this」

「Then!?」

A delightful expression floats on Mirena-san's face.

「I would like to see the Mermaid village, so I don't mind going, but…… I may not be able to resolve your problem, you know?」

「That does not matter! Please come by all means!」

I'm not sure I can help because I didn't hear the details.

Should I have asked first? But, she told she would explain in detail in the village so……

But, the Water God's retainer-sama gave a seal of approval, so it's probably not something too difficult. And even if I'm not successful, looking at Mirena-san's reaction, I won't get blamed either.

Following in itself is an introduction to the Water God's retainer-sama. A person(?) who is worried about Allen and Elena. They wouldn't let the twins approach something dangerous. There shouldn't be any problem.

「Then, I will borrow this bracelet」

「No, I offer that to you. Please think of it as a fee for going to the village. Of course, if you have problem with that, we will prepare a different remuneration in the village」

「No, no, this is something precious, right!?」

「There are people engaged in magic tools in the village, so quite a number of them exist. To begin with, this magic tool is necessary in order to enter the village, so please accept it without reservation」

I thought it's a valuable magic tool, but this bracelet apparently isn't that valuable to the mermaids.

Because the material is the scales of mermaids, they probably don't lack materials to make it……

Well, that. If she says to take it, I will take it.

◊ – ♦ – ◊

I retrieve Joule and others who were guarding around the sandy beach to my shadow and put on the bracelets on Allen's and Elena's arms. Then, I put one on myself, hold the two's hands and enter the sea.

When the depth of water reached my shin, I tried raising my leg from the water.

Oo, it really didn't get wet. This is incredible!

My clothes and boots are totally dry. I'm deeply moved by the performance of this magic tool.

It allows breathing underwater, but there are no problems yet, so it's possible to use it on the surface too? If I put it on a rainy day, I won't get wet?

It looks like this magic tool can be used for something it wasn't originally made for. I obtained something good~

When we reached a certain depth, I timidly tried to dive in a while holding Allen's and Elena's hands.

「!」

Iya~ how exciting~

Even though I know that I can breathe without problems, I can't help it but be nervous about the first breath, right?

「Is everything all right?」

「Y, yes. Everything's fine」

Breathing aside, talking underwater is also a strange feeling.

However, it's so amusing!

My heart is throbbing experiencing something I never did before.

Allen and Elena also seem to be enjoying themselves underwater.

Breathing is alright, the next one would be swimming…..

「Ah～ … Allen, Elena… are you okay?」

「「Fun～」」

「I see……」

Un, there doesn't seem to be a problem.

When I release their hands, the two are normally swimming.

I knew. This development is exactly as I imagined!

Still, isn't this too fast!? They are already… smoothly swimming, you know!!

Ah～ Since the two are alright, I will try to swim too.

I position my body horizontally, extend my arms and flap with my legs.

Breaststroke? Crawl? I somehow know the form, but I never have done it before, though!

From time to time, I move my hands to paddle the water and move forward.

Oo, is this okay? I am swimming properly…… I think.

Umm…… like this? Then, like this…… oo? I am swimming?!

I tried breaststroke for a trial, I was able to do it. I wasn't able to do it in the slightest in the past…… I'm a bit happy.

Ah! Right, the mermaid!

I was too absorbed in trying to swim so I did not check the thing about Mirena-san.

When I look at Mirena-san again, it was the same as the illustrations that appear in fantasy novels and manga, the upper body of a woman in a bikini and the lower body of a fish.

The scales of the lower part of body went from light red to dark red, it gets darker as you go from the waist to the tailfin, a beautiful gradation.

「Ah～… I have kept you waiting. Everything's fine now」

Crap. While observing in a trance, my eyes matched Mirena-san's.

Mirena-san was quietly watching over us while we were learning to swim…… she's smiling for some reason……

I approached Mirena-san and told her that everything is fine now and we can move.

「I understand. Then, let's depart」

「Ah, yes. Allen, Elena. Let's go～」

「「Ye～s」」

We start swimming after Mirena-san who is guiding us to her village.

Chapter 40
Undersea Stroll and Request

「Allen, Elena, you alright~?」

「「Al~right」」

「Don't get too far away, okay?」

「「Ye~s」」

Although unfamiliar to swimming, Allen and Elena keep on swimming without any problems.

Moreover, they can swim at such speed I thought they had a propeller attached.

A world record is not a problem.

There is a big difference between them and myself who is still swimming somewhat awkwardly. I should get quickly used to it……

「Mirena-san, what kind of monsters are around here?」

「The monster around here are mainly Sand Crabs and Bomb Shelters, they are not that strong. When we get a little bit deeper, more powerful monsters will appear, but…… the most troublesome among them would be probably the Giant Killer Shark」

Giant Killer Shark… a C-Rank monster.

Although it's C-Rank, will it be okay since we are not used to the underwater combat?

「Ah, that's Hammerfish」

While speaking about monsters that appear in the vicinity, it appeared at once.

Hammerfish is an E-Rank monster.

A monster of Bluefin tuna size with the point of its head shaped like a hammer. It's not that dangerous monster if you pay attention to its head which it uses as a blunt weapon.

「「Yaa!」」

Ah, Allen and Elena swim at superspeed and kick it.

Un, that's an instant death.

It seems that being underwater doesn't hinder Allen and Elena one bit. Rather, I feel like their attack power and speed is better than on the surface.

If one is a relative of the Water God, is the underwater combat his specialty?

「Onii~chan」

「Fish~」

「Thank you」

Allen and Elena return with the Hammerfish by holding it by its hammer part.

「「Ah」」

After the two hand me the Hammerfish, they notice a monster again.

N~ The one who appeared seems to be the Sand Crab.

It's about 6~70cm tall counting its shell. It will be even taller if it extends its legs, though.

「Weird~!」

「Kita~!」

Until now, their opponents were only animal and insect type monsters, so seeing fish and crustacean type monsters for the first time gets Allen and Elena in high spirits.

「Be careful of the claws. Don't get hurt okay~」

「「Ye~s」」

I remind the two who swam towards the crab right after discovering it to be careful.

It would be dangerous if they get caught by the crab's claws…… ——Is what I thought, but it looks like I didn't have to worry.

The two quickly defeat the Sand Crab and return while each holding one of its claws.

「「This, what is it~?」」

「Sand Crab. It's a crab」

「「Crab~?」」

「It's delicious when boiled. Would you like to eat it next time?」

「「Will eat~!」」

Sand Crab's raw meat itself is gritty, but it seems to be delicious when heated.

It's alright to eat it as is, but when it comes to crab, it's a Kani Nabe[1] after all! It's out of season, but it doesn't matter, right?

Let's make it immediately once we return to the surface!

After that, Allen and Elena crisply defeated all monsters which appeared.

Mirena-san who saw Allen and Elena defeat the monsters one by one says in amazement with her eyes blinking.

「…… They are strong, aren't they?……」

「Hahaha~……」

Un, I tried to laugh it off for the time being.

◊ – ♦ – ◊

About two hours after diving into the sea.

「Wha!?」

「Welcome and thank you for coming. This is our village」

Suddenly, something like a blue crystal appeared in front of me. The size is of a small mountain.

Even though the scenery was just a mere seascape until a while ago…… Which reminds me, I just passed through something like a thin membrane.

Camouflage? Some kind of an illusion barrier?

「What have we passed through just now?」

「You have noticed? It's as you guess. An illusion that makes it look like nothing is there and a barrier which prevents monsters to invade. Two barriers are set up here」

「Since we have entered it means that humans are able to enter?」

「Even if it's humans, they won't be able to enter. It's possible to enter only if they go together just like us」

I see. If Mirena-san weren't with us, we wouldn't be able to pass through the barrier.

Nevertheless, just what is this crystal like thing……

【Sea Crystal】
A crystal that the sea itself crystallized into.
Conceals the power of the sea.

「…… Sea Crystal?」

「Yes, that's right. Because this is the Blue Sea, we all call it the Blue Waters Shrine」

Because I see people coming in and out of the Sea Crystal, the crystal itself must be the residence…… It's probably something like the Mermaid Castle.

The semitransparent blue crystal has the appearances of a simple castle. If I had to say, the blue crystal looks more like a mountain than a castle.

However, it has very magical, overwhelming aura.

Blue Waters Shrine…… This can only be called "sugoi."

「Sparkly~」

「Pretty~」

「Yeah. It's very pretty」

「Fufufu. Thank you very much. I will guide you inside later, but could you follow me to the back of the Blue Waters Shrine first, please?」

「Ah, yes」

After a while of gazing at the Blue Waters Shrine, Mirena-san guided us to the back of the Blue Waters Shrine.

There is a rock face in the back, behind the Blue Waters Shrine, but———

「I would like you to do something about this」

「A ship?」

There is a fairly large ship at the place where Mirena-san guides us to.

It beautifully sunk between the rock face and the rear of the Blue Waters Shrine.

「There is an entrance to the cave where we raise corals, but as you can see it has been blocked by this ship. The people of the village gathered to do something about it before, but we weren't able to move it even an inch…… While greatly perplexed what to do, the Blue Waters Shrine's lord, Miko Himesama received an oracle」

The ship fell exactly right between.

There are almost no gaps between the rock face and the rear of the Blue Waters Shrine.

If the ship was a slightly bigger it wouldn't block the entrance and if it was slightly smaller, the mermaids would be able to move it themselves.

Iya~ It fits in perfectly.

Indeed, it's possible for me to remove it. After all, I just have to put it in the《Infinite Storage》.

「I can remove this immediately」

I approach the sunken ship and store it in the《Infinite Storage》.

When I confirm the《Infinite Storage》list, the sunken ship (Dietlinde model) was properly showing up.

The Dietlinde model seems to be a cargo ship as many barrels, and wooden boxes were collected together.

Well, I would have to check the boxes one by one as I don't know what's inside.

What to do with this? It's sunk into the sea, and the boxes are soaked wet.

It depends on the objects, but I expect most of them being ruined.

What should I do if it's food?

It wouldn't be spoiled, but it would definitely be in a totally terrible condition…… I don't want to check the contents……

U~n…… for the time being, let's leave it like that.

Nevertheless, as there were no dead bodies, the sailors must have been able to escape before the ship sunk.

As expected, I would feel awkward carrying people's corpses in the《Infinite Storage》.

「Is it all right like this?」

Uwa!

When I turned around, other mermaids gathered beside Mirena-san before I noticed.

「Thank you very much!」

「It's nothing, rather than that, shouldn't you take a look at the coral?」

「That's right」

I see a cave entrance in the rock face, that must be it.

Mirena-san gives instructions to the other mermaids in a hurry and several people enter the cave.

「Is that coral an important coral?」

「Yes. It's used as material in various medicines. Especially us, mermaids, need a specific medicine to cure illness, therefore we can't afford to lose that coral」

That is very important then.

I'm certain that corals…… inhabit only places with clear water?

I don't know when the ship sunk, I hope it didn't wither away……

「Fortunately, not much time passed since the ship sunk, so there wasn't much damage done. You have really saved us」

「Is that so? I'm glad I could be of help」

Unexpectedly, the ship seems to have sunk only a few days ago.

Although I wouldn't be blamed, I would not be able to bear it if the coral got destroyed.

「Well then, Miko Himesama is waiting, let me guide you there」

Next is the meeting with Himesama, huh~ She said the Lord of the Blue Water Shrine, right?

Now then, what kind of person is she?

Chapter 41
Miko-sama and Reward

The atmosphere in the Blue Waters Shrine overflows with “harmony.”

Magic tools shaped as lanterns are illuminating the path, the grid windows, and the bridge railing gives off a feeling of the old capital, Kyoto.

「Miko Himesama, I have brought Takumi-sama, Allen-sama, and Elena-sama」

「Please, enter」

We were guided to the most inner part of the Blue Waters Shrine where the Miko Himesama is.

There is a light-blue haired girl in her teens and an elderly man inside the spacious room.

Is this girl the Miko Himesama?

The gracefully smiling girl is wearing a celestial kimono, emitting an aura of a young princess.

「Takumi-sama, Allen-sama, Elena-sama. Welcome」

「Umm…… Thank you very much for inviting us?」

「Fufufu. Please, do not be so stiff. Rather, we are the ones who should show respect to you」

「Eh!?」

Wait a moment! What do you mean?

I got startled by Miko Himesama's words.

Miko Himesama is a great person in the Mermaid Tribe, right? Why should a person like that show respect to me?

「I have heard that Takumi-sama is a benefactor of the Water God's Retainer-sama」

「Miko Himesama, thanks to Takumi-sama, our problem have also been solved. I have other people checking the coral right at this moment」

「I am really glad. Then, Takumi-sama is our benefactor, is he not?」

「That's right」

「No, that's a little……」

Hey, Water God's Retainer-sama~ What kind of nonsense have you told them~~

Just how much have you told them? Surely, you didn't expose my true identity, did you!?

「Err… I don't know what you were told, but if you know that……」

「Please, do not worry. Only the three of us here know about the Oracle I have received. Naturally, we will not reveal it」

「Thank you very much. Incidentally, what were you told……」

Just in case, I ask how much they know……

「I have heard that Takumi-sama is a person of principles and very kind person」

「…… Please, give me a break」

Is she talking about me!?

Just what have you told them~~ Please stop iiit~

「Fufu. You are exactly as Retainer-sama said」

……

I'm troubled…… I'm worried about what the Water God's Retainer-sama told Miko Himesama, but I have a feeling that I don't want to know……

「Miko Himesama, Takumi-sama is troubled」

「Ara, Gard. I am just telling the truth, there is no reason for Takumi-sama to be troubled」

「Then, you wouldn't mind if I tell him on the day of the first meeting with Miko Himesama『That I know Miko Himesama very well. She's quite the tomboy』would you?」

The elderly man next to Miko Himesama stops her.

On the contrary to my expectations of Miko Himesama being a secluded Ojousama, it seems she's quite the tomboyish child…… Her appearances don't match her personality.

「…… Iya. Takumi-sama, please forgive us」

「No worries……」

「Right, right, I have not introduced you to Takumi-sama yet, did I? He is Gard, the Chief managing the mermaids living here」

「I'm the Chief, Gard. Thank you very much for today」

The man is apparently the Chief of mermaids. He's very good-natured-ish looking old man.

「Chief, is it? I heard that the Miko Himesama is the Lord of Blue Waters Shrine, is Chief something different?」

「Yes. I am indeed the Lord of the Blue Waters Shrine, but Miko Hime the so-called honorary position. The person with the most affinity with the God takes the place generation after generation. There's a different one for each clan」

Actually, there is no way to know the affinity with the God, so abilities, etc. are unrelated. Miko Hime is a symbolic existence, a woman elected by the clan to become a holy individual.

Miko Himesama mutters『I did not really want to do it because it is too stiff…』in a small voice.

If a tomboyish girl is her true nature, the current appearances of a graceful Miko Hime is an act.

She must have it tough.

「…… Being Miko Himesama must be tough, huh?」

「Fufufu. That is right」

It seems she heard the words I unconsciously muttered.

Miko Himesama agrees with a laugh.

「Right, right. We have to present the reward to Takumi-sama」

「Ah, that! In that case, wouldn't you teach us the way of using water magic?」

Talking about the reward, I asked about what was on my mind.

Right. I want to learn water magic.

Mermaids living underwater would know a thing or two about water magic, right?

「Water magic, is it? Certainly, most of the Mermaids can use it, but……」

「We possess the【Water Magic】skill, but I'm troubled because I can't use it well. The children have never used magic before……」

In fact, when we moved through the sea, I tried using the water magic, but it didn't go well.

I tried shooting the low level《Water Ball》, but it had no power. *Besha*, just about a fistful of water spurted out.

Because I myself can't use it, I am not able to teach it to Allen and Elena.

「If that is the case, there is no problem. I will introduce you to a user who excels at teaching! However, the reward is separate」

「No, just teaching us is enough」

Even though I solved their problem, I just put the ship into the《Infinite Storage》.

I would be grateful for just being able to learn water magic.

「No, I request you to accept it. Although I said reward, it is something unnecessary for us…… Would you please look at it first?」

…… N? Unnecessary?

What does she mean?

Saying, please look at the goods first, Mirena-san guides us to the place where the reward is.

◊ – ♦ – ◊

「This way, please」

「This is?」

The place I was guided to is a cave in the rock face in the rear of the Blue Waters Shrine. Inside the cave, there was a spacious room with a lot of things were piled up.

Seaweed in a shell?

Fish bones with some kind of stones?

There really was a lot of things. Moreover, a considerably large quantity of each.

【Bracka seaweed】
A medicinal plant inhabiting deep seas.
Because it has an effect of lowering temperature, it's used as a material for antipyretic and salves for burns treatment.

【Bone of Giant Shark】
Hard, but light bone.
Utilized as material for weapons.

After appraising it, every seaweed and shells were materials for medicine. The bones can be used for making weapons.

「Everything has quite a value, you know?」

And yet they say that everything in here is part of the reward.

「This~」

「Wha~t?」

「Eh? Pearl!? Huge!」

Allen and Elena brought a golf ball-sized pearl. Looking carefully, a great amount of various sized pearls were rolling on the ground beside the two.

Not only big ones but also normal sized pearls that could be used to make necklaces. And they are just *gorogoro* on the floor.

White and black, purple, pink, yellow…… various colors.

This is my first time seeing so many pearls.

「To tell you the truth, this place is our garbage dump…」

Haa!? Garbage dump?

This all, are you saying this all is a garbage!?

「When we pick something that sunk around the Blue Waters Shrine or the ocean floor, we put it here」

「Everything!? I mean, this is a pearl, you know?」

「That's a stone that comes from the edible shells, isn't it? The big ones come from Big Shells, but…… Either of them is not a magic stone, you know?」

「Pearl is a kind of a gem, you know?」

「Is that so? I like gems too, but I like the more sparkling and transparent ones better?」

「……」

Ofu…… these people recognize pearls that come out of shells as stones.

I see, I see now……

Are? To the people of Aetherdia…… it's a gem, right? Without a doubt.

「It's as Retainer-sama said then, although it has no worth to us, it seems it's attractive stone to humans」

That's right. I'm really startled by your different sense of value.

「As you can see the place has become full…… Although we think it's rude to give something unnecessary to us as reward, we would be much grateful if you received it……」

「……」

I have no words to say anymore.

Allen, Elena. Do you like that pearl? It seems we can take it, so I will.

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